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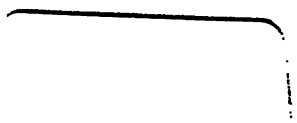
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*Main English editions only* 1871  
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A

**HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**RUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.**

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**BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D.**

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**IN SOME PARTS ABRIDGED, WITH APPENDICES,**

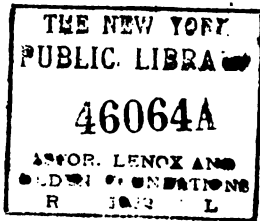
**BY A. A. L.**

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“Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field?—Whence then hath it tares?”

---

**KEENE, N. H.**  
**J. AND J. W. PRENTISS.**  
1838.



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## P R E F A C E .

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THE present work has long been out of print, though it is often sought for; and the few chance copies to be met with, command so high a price as to put it out of the power of most persons to possess it. It is published in the present style and form in order to render it accessible to other persons besides scholars and critics, and to give it a diffusion amongst laymen, who are interested in the great questions of theology. The controversy, to which the three first parts more particularly relate, may now seem to be over. It may be in some places. But in general, it is still proceeding, taking new forms indeed, but agitating deeply the bosom of the community, modifying creeds, dividing churches and sects, and crystallizing the solvent materials of society into new shapes and solids. Long after the heavy gusts of the storm have passed, the sea continues to roll. The object of publishing the work, is, to promote the cause of pure religion, by presenting the best, known historical view of those departures from the simplicity of Jesus Christ, which have been produced by the disturbing influences of human prejudices and philosophy. It will encourage the faith of every true Christian to see how the Sun of Righteousness slowly emerges from its long and disastrous eclipse, with unshorn rays, and the promise of shedding in due time upon the darkened nations the brightness of the perfect day. The Reformation was commenced, but was not completed by Luther and his associates. The process of purifying Christianity must be slow and gradual, as was the process of corrupting it. A history of the causes, operation, and extent of the corruptions, must be serviceable in procuring and applying their remedies, as, in medicine, the first step towards a cure is to know the disorder.

In re-publishing this work, no sect whatever is to be considered as implicated in the responsibility, but only those individuals, the Editor and the Publishers, who have acted in the matter. Again, because the work is deemed worthy of re-publication, it is not to be inferred that assent is given by those engaged in it, to every opinion, argument, and statement therein; though of course the book would not have been offered to the public, except on the ground of general agreement with its tenor, and a strong conviction of its merits and usefulness.

For it is one of the fundamental principles of Unitarians, and one upon which they act, that a man is to hold himself responsible for no opinions, except his own, and is accordingly to pin his faith to no man's sleeve, be it the papal scarlet, or the bishop's lawn, but is to exercise the right of private judgment in religion, uninfluenced by the fear or the favor of man, seeking light from all quarters, wherever it may break forth, and bowing to Jesus Christ alone, as his Master. The views of Dr PRIESTLEY differ much in several respects from those of a large portion of the Unitarians. He is not to be taken as the representative of their faith, nor is any other single individual. Least of all, would those engaged in the present work, undertake to defend all his opinions, or vouch for the soundness of all his reasonings. But where compelled to disagree with him, they cannot but love and respect his uniform and unequalled candor, good temper, love of truth, and moral independence.

The following is a book of *facts*, not merely the statement of *opinions*, and though some may not agree with the author in all his inferences from historical facts, yet all are here furnished with a store-house of invaluable materials for making up independent judgments of their own on the subjects discussed.

One word is demanded by the aspersions that have been freely and generally lavished upon the author. Quite a common idea has been that he was an infidel in disguise, industrious in sapping the foundations of Christianity, and poisoning the minds of men, yet holding on to the name of Christian, that he might do his fell work all the more effectually—an error as great, as to confound the surgeon who uses the lancet to save life, with the assassin who thrusts in his dagger to destroy it. Priestley cut off with a courageous and skilful hand the gangrened excrescences, but he left the true body restored and healthful. It was his jealousy for the purity of Christianity that drew down upon him persecution whilst living, and dishonor upon his posthumous reputation. That he was a sincere Christian, in his heart, his life, and his writings, all who were intimate with his character and conduct, and have perused his works, earnestly testify. One who was personally acquainted with him uses these words: "I can truly say that I never met with any one who was superior to him in the greatest and most lovely qualities. Without any affectation of sanctity, he was habitually of a devout frame of mind; perhaps no human being was more in the practice of referring every thing to God. He had learning and knowledge enough for a dozen respectable men; yet he had all the simplicity of a little child. There was a charm about his conversation, which caused many to respect and love him, although they continued to adhere to an opposite creed—witness the eloquent eulogies of Robert Hall and Dr Parr."

EDITOR.

## DEDICATION.

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TO THE

REV. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, A. M.

DEAR FRIEND,—Wishing, as I do, that my name may ever be connected as closely with yours after death, as we have been connected by friendship in life, it is with peculiar satisfaction that I dedicate this work (which I am willing to hope will be one of the most useful of my publications) to you.

To your example of a pure love of truth, and of the most fearless integrity in asserting it, evidenced by the sacrifices you have made to it, I owe much of my own wishes to imitate the same spirit; though a more favorable education, and situation in life, by not giving me an opportunity of distinguishing myself as you have done, has, likewise, not exposed me to the temptation of acting otherwise; and for this I wish to be truly thankful. For since so very few of those who profess the same sentiments with you, have had the courage to act consistently with them, no person, whatever he may *imagine* he might have been equal to, can have a right to presume, that he would have been one of so small a number.

No person can see in a stronger light than you do the mischievous consequences of the corruptions of that religion which you justly prize, as the most valuable of the gifts of God to man; and therefore I flatter myself, it will give you some pleasure to accompany me in my researches into the origin and progress of them, as this will tend to give all the friends of pure christianity the fullest satisfaction that they reflect no discredit on the revelation itself; since it will be seen that they all came in from a foreign and hostile quarter. It will likewise afford a pleasing presage, that our religion will, in due time, purge itself of every thing that debases it, and that for the present prevents



its reception by those who are ignorant of its nature, whether living in Christian countries, or among Mahometans and heathens.

The gross darkness of that *night* which has for many centuries obscured our holy religion, we may clearly see, is past ; the *morning* is opening upon us ; and we cannot doubt but that the light will increase, and extend itself more and more, unto the *perfect day*. Happy are they who contribute to diffuse the pure light of this *everlasting gospel*. The time is coming when the detection of one error, or prejudice, relating to this most important subject, and the success we have in opening and enlarging the minds of men with respect to it, will be considered as far more honorable than any discovery we can make in other branches of knowledge, or our success in propagating them.

In looking back upon the dismal scene which the shocking corruptions of christianity exhibit, we may well exclaim with the prophet, *How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed*. But the thorough examination of every thing relating to christianity, which has been produced by the corrupt state of it, and which nothing else would probably have led to, has been as *the refiner's fire* with respect to it ; and when it shall have stood this test, it may be presumed that the truth and excellency of it will never more be called in question.

This corrupt state of christianity has, no doubt, been permitted by the Supreme Governor of the world for the best of purposes, and it is the same great Being who is also now, in the course of his providence, employing these means to *purge his floor*. The civil powers of this world, which were formerly the chief supports of the antichristian systems, which have *given their power and strength unto the beast* (Rev. xvii. 13) now begin to *hate her*, and are ready to *make her desolate and naked*, ver. 16. To answer their own political purposes, they are now promoting various reformations in the church ; and it can hardly be doubted, but that the difficulties in which many of the European nations are now involving themselves, will make other measures of reformation highly expedient and necessary.

Also, while the attention of men in power is engrossed by the difficulties that more immediately press upon them, the endeavors of the friends of reformation in points of *doctrine* pass with less notice, and operate without obstruc-

tion. Let us rejoice in the *good* that results from this *evil*, and omit no opportunity that is furnished us, voluntarily to co-operate with the gracious intention of divine providence; and let us make that our primary object, which others are doing to promote their own sinister ends. All those who labor in the discovery and communication of truth, if they be actuated by a pure love of it, and a sense of its importance to the happiness of mankind, may consider themselves *as workers together with God*, and may proceed with confidence, assured that *their labors* in this cause *shall not be in vain*, whether they themselves see the fruit of it or not.

The more opposition we meet with in these labors, the more honorable it will be to us, provided we meet that opposition with the true spirit of christianity. And to assist us in this, we should frequently reflect that many of our opponents are probably men who wish as well to the gospel as we do ourselves, and really think *they do God service* by opposing us. Even prejudice and bigotry, arising from such a principle, are respectable things, and entitled to the greatest candor. If our religion teaches us to *love our enemies*, certainly we should love, and, from a principle of love, should endeavor to convince those, who, if they were only better informed, would embrace us as friends.

The time will come, when the cloud, which for the present prevents our distinguishing our friends and our foes, will be dispersed, even that day in which *the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed* to the view of all. In the mean time, let us think as favorably as possible of all men, our particular opponents not excepted; and therefore be careful to conduct all *hostility* with the pleasing prospect that one day it will give place to the most perfect *amity*.

You, my friend, peculiarly happy in a most placid, as well as a most determined mind, have nothing to blame yourself for in this respect. If, on any occasion, I have indulged too much asperity, I hope I shall, by your example, learn to correct myself, and without abating my zeal in the common cause.

As we are now both of us past the meridian of life, I hope we shall be looking more and more beyond it, and be preparing for that world, where we shall have no errors to combat, and consequently where *a talent for disputation*

will be of no use; but where the *spirit of love* will find abundant exercise; where all our labors will be of the most friendly and benevolent nature, and where our employment will be its own reward.

Let these views brighten the evening of our lives, that *evening*, which will be enjoyed with more satisfaction, in proportion as the *day* shall have been laboriously and well spent. Let us then, without reluctance, submit to that temporary rest in the grave, which our wise Creator has thought proper to appoint for all the human race, our Savior himself not wholly excepted; anticipating with joy the glorious *morning of the resurrection*, when we shall meet that Savior whose precepts we have obeyed, whose spirit we have breathed, whose religion we have defended, whose *cup* also we may, in some measure, have drank of, and whose honors we have asserted, without making them to interfere with those of *his father and our father, of his God and our God*, that supreme, that great and awful Being, to whose will he was always most perfectly submissive, and for whose unrivalled prerogative he always showed the most ardent zeal.

With the truest affection,

I am,

Dear Friend,

Your Brother,

In the faith and hope of the gospel,

J. PRIESTLEY.

BIRMINGHAM, Nov. 1782.

## DR PRIESTLEY'S PREFACE.

---

AFTER examining the foundation of our Christian faith, and having seen how much valuable information we receive from it, in my *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, it is with a kind of reluctance, that, according to my proposal, I must now proceed to exhibit a view of the dreadful corruptions which have debased its spirit, and almost annihilated all the happy effects which it was eminently calculated to produce. It is some satisfaction to us, however, and is more than sufficient to answer any objection that may be made to Christianity itself from the consideration of these corruptions, that they appear to have been clearly foreseen by Christ, and by several of the apostles. And we have at this day the still greater satisfaction, to perceive that, according to the predictions contained in the books of scripture, Christianity has begun to recover itself from this corrupted state, and that the reformation advances apace. And though some of the most shocking abuses still continue in many places, their virulence is very generally abated; and the number is greatly increased of those who are most zealous in the profession of Christianity, whose lives are the greatest ornament to it, and who hold it in so much purity, that, if it was fairly exhibited, and universally understood, it could hardly fail to recommend itself to the acceptance of the whole world, of Jews and Gentiles.

The clear and full exhibition of truly *reformed Christianity* seems now to be almost the only thing that is wanting to the universal prevalence of it. But so long as all the Christianity that is known to heathens, Mahometans, and Jews, is of a corrupted and debased kind; and particularly while the profession of it is so much connected with *worldly interest*, it is no wonder that mankind in general refuse to admit it, and that they can even hardly be prevailed upon to give any attention to the evidence that is alleged in its favor. Whereas, when the system itself shall

appear to be less liable to objection, it is to be hoped, that they may be brought to give proper attention to it, and to the evidence on which it rests.

Disagreeable as must be the view of these corruptions of Christianity, to those who love and value it, it may not be without its use, even with respect to themselves. For the more their abhorrence and indignation are excited by the consideration of what has so long passed for Christianity, the more highly will they esteem what is truly so; the contrast will be so striking, and so greatly in its favor. Both these valuable ends, I hope, will be, in some measure, answered by this attempt, to exhibit what appear to me to have been the great deviations from the genuine system and spirit of Christianity, and the causes that produced them.

In the *Conclusion* of this work, I have taken the liberty, which I hope will not be thought improper, to endeavor to call the attention of *unbelievers* to the subject of the corruptions of Christianity, being sensible that this is one of the principal causes of infidelity.

There is nothing, I hope, in the *manner* of the address that will give offence, as none was intended. I trust, that from a sense of its infinite importance, I am deeply concerned for the honor of the religion I profess. I would, therefore, willingly do any thing that may be in my power (and I hope with a temper not unbecoming the gospel) to make it both properly *understood*, and also completely *reformed*, in order to its more general propagation, and to its producing its proper effects on the hearts and lives of men; and consequently, to its more speedily becoming, what it is destined to be, the greatest blessing to all the nations of the world.

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NOTE.—It will be proper to mention here that Dr Priestley examined, and has quoted in the course of his work, the following authors, ancient and modern: Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Novatian, Arnobius, Cyprian, Cyril, Athanasius, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Hilary, Gregory Nazianzenus, Optatus, Chrysostom, Basil,

Augustine, Socrates, Sozomen, Gregory the Great, Lactantius, Hierononymus, John Damascenus, Bernard of Clairval, Peter the Lombard, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Dupin, Grotius, Beausobre, Basnage, Giannone, Fleury, Sueur, and some others. In the original work, from which this Abridgment is made, he mentions the editions which he used of the works of these writers, and in the course of his History specifies the volume, chapter, section, page, etc. from which his authorities, and quotations are drawn. But in this Abridgment these references are omitted, because they would occupy too much room, and would not be of much advantage to any readers except to professed scholars, who might have in their possession the authors referred to; and who besides would, if possible, read the entire book in preference to any abridgment whatsoever.

## CONTENTS.

---

	Page.
The History of Opinions relating to Jesus Christ, . . . . .	13
The History of Opinions relating to the doctrine of the Atonement, . . . . .	90
The History of Opinions concerning Grace, Original Sin, and Predestination, . . . . .	155
The History of Opinions relating to Saints and Angels, . . . . .	180
The History of Opinions concerning the state of the Dead, . . . . .	194
The History of Opinions relating to the Lord's Supper, . . . . .	199
The History of Opinions relating to Baptism, . . . . .	211
The History of the Changes that have been made in the method of conducting Public Worship, . . . . .	221
The History of Church Discipline, . . . . .	235
The History of Ministers in the Christian Church, and especially of Bishops, . . . . .	247
The History of the Papal Power, . . . . .	254
The History of Councils, . . . . .	261
Of the Authority of the Secular Powers, or the Civil Magistrate, in matters of Religion, . . . . .	265
Of the Authority of Tradition, and of the Scriptures, . . . . .	268
The History of the Monastic Life, . . . . .	271
The History of Church Revenues, . . . . .	279
The General Conclusion, . . . . .	285
The Appendices, . . . . .	291

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

—●●—  
PART I.

THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS RELATING TO JESUS CHRIST.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

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*The Unity of God* is a doctrine on which the greatest stress is laid in the whole system of revelation.\* To guard

\* "Those passages in the New Testament in which the Father is styled one, or only God, are in number 17.

"Those passages where he is styled God absolutely, by way of eminence and supremacy, are in number 320.

"Those passages where he is styled God, with peculiarly high titles and epithets, or attributes, are in number 105.

"Those passages wherein it is declared that all prayers and praises ought to be offered to him, and that every thing ought to be ultimately directed to his honor and glory, are in number 90.

"Passages wherein the Son is declared, positively, and by the clearest implication, to be subordinate to the Father, deriving his being from him, receiving from him his Divine power, and acting in all things wholly according to the will of the Father, are in number above 300.

"Of 1300 passages in the New Testament wherein the word God is mentioned, not one of them necessarily implies a plurality of persons.

"To which may be added about 2000 in the Old Testament, in which the Unity of God is either positively expressed or evidently implied."—*Grundy's Lectures, quoted in a note in Bur-  
nap's Lectures on Unitarianism, p. 38.*



this most important article was the principal object of the Jewish religion ; and, notwithstanding the proneness of the Jews to idolatry, at length it fully answered its purpose, in reclaiming them, and in impressing the minds of many persons of other nations in favor of the same fundamental truth.

The Jews were taught by their prophets to expect a Messiah, who was to be descended from the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, a person in whom themselves and all the nations of the earth should be blessed ; but none of their prophets gave them an idea of any other than a man like themselves,\* in that illustrious character ; and no other did they ever expect, or do they expect to this day.

Jesus Christ, whose history answers to the description given of the Messiah by the prophets, made no other pretensions ; referring all his extraordinary power to God, his father, who, he expressly says, spake and acted by him, and who raised him from the dead ; and it is most evident that the apostles, and all those who conversed with our Lord, before and after his resurrection, considered him in no other light than simply as *a man approved of God, by signs and wonders which God did by him.*—Acts ii. 22.

Not only do we find no trace of so prodigious a change in the ideas which the apostles entertained concerning Christ, as from that of *a man like themselves* (which it must be acknowledged were the first that they entertained) to that of *the most high God*, or one who was, in any sense, their *maker* or *preserver*, that when their minds were most fully enlightened, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, and to the latest period of their ministry, they continued to speak of him in the same style ; even when it is evident they must have intended to speak of him in a manner suited to his state of greatest exaltation and glory. Peter uses the simple language above quoted, of *a man approved of God* immediately after the descent of the Spirit, and the apostle Paul, giving what may be called the Christian creed, says, 1 Tim. ii. 5, *There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* He does not say the *God* ; the *God man*, or the *superangelic being*, but simply *the man Christ Jesus* ; and nothing can be alleged from the New Testament in favor of any higher na-

\* Appendix A.

ture of Christ, except a few passages interpreted without any regard to the context, or the modes of speech and opinions of the times in which the books were written, and in such a manner in other respects, as would authorize our proving any doctrine whatever from them.

From this plain doctrine of the scriptures, a doctrine so consonant to reason and the ancient prophecies, christians have at length come to believe what they do not pretend to have any conception of, and than which it is not possible to frame a more express contradiction. For while they consider Christ as the supreme eternal God, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, they moreover acknowledge the Father and the Holy Spirit to be equally *God*, in the same exalted sense, all three equal in power and glory, and yet all three constituting no more than one God.

To a person the least interested in the inquiry, it must appear an object of curiosity to trace by what means, and by what steps, so great a change has taken place, and what circumstances in the history of other opinions, and of the world, proved favorable to the successive changes. An opinion, and especially an opinion adopted by great numbers of mankind, is to be considered as any other *fact in history*; for it cannot be produced without an *adequate cause*, and is therefore a proper object of philosophical inquiry. In this case I think it not difficult to find causes abundantly adequate to the purpose, and it is happily in our power to trace almost every step by which the changes have been successively brought about.

If the interest that mankind have generally taken in any thing will at all contribute to interest us in the inquiry concerning it, this history cannot fail to engage our attention. For perhaps in no business whatever have the minds of men been more agitated; and *speculative* as the nature of the thing is, in few cases has the peace of society been so much disturbed. To this very day, of such importance is the subject considered by thousands and ten thousands, that they cannot write or speak of it without the greatest emotion, and without treating their opponents with the greatest rancor. If good sense and humanity did not interpose to mitigate the rigor of law, thousands would be sacrificed to the cause of orthodoxy in this single article; and the greatest number of sufferers would probably be in this very coun-

try (England) on account of the greater freedom of inquiry which prevails here, in consequence of which we entertain and profess the greatest diversity of opinions.

The various steps in this interesting history it is now my business to point out, and I wish that all my readers may attend me with as much coolness and impartiality as I trust I shall myself preserve through the whole of this investigation.

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## SECTION I.

### OF THE OPINION OF THE ANCIENT JEWISH AND GENTILE CHURCHES.

THAT the ancient Jewish church must have held the opinion that Christ was simply a *man*, and not either *God Almighty*, or a *superangelic being*, may be concluded from its being the clear doctrine of the scripture, and from the apostles having taught no other; but there is sufficient evidence of the same thing from ecclesiastical history. It is unfortunate, indeed, that there are now extant so few remains of any of the writers who immediately succeeded the apostles, and especially that we have only a few inconsiderable fragments of Hegesippus, a Jewish christian, who wrote the history of the church in continuation of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and who travelled to Rome about the year 160; but it is not difficult to collect evidence enough in support of my assertion.

The members of the Jewish church were, in general, in very low circumstances, which may account for their having few persons of learning among them; on which account they were much despised by the richer and more learned gentile christians, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem, before which event all the christians in Judea (warned by our Savior's prophecies concerning the desolation of that country) had retired to the North-east of the sea of Galilee. They were likewise despised by the gentiles for their bigoted adherence to the law of Moses, to the rite of circumcision, and other ceremonies of their ancient religion.

And on all these accounts they probably got the name of *Ebionites*, which signifies *poor* and *mean*, in the same manner as many of the early reformers from popery got the name of *Beghards*, and other appellations of a similar nature. The fate of these ancient Jewish christians was, indeed, peculiarly hard. For, besides the neglect of the gentile christians, they were, as Epiphanius (A. D. 374) informs us, held in the greatest abhorrence by the Jews from whom they had separated, and who cursed them in a solemn manner three times, whenever they met for public worship.

In general, these ancient Jewish christians retained the appellation of Nazarenes, and, it may be inferred from Origen, (A. D. 230) Epiphanius, and Eusebius, (A. D. 325) that the Nazarenes and Ebionites were the same people, and held the same tenets, though some of them supposed that Christ was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary, while others of them held that he had no natural father, but had a miraculous birth. Epiphanius, in his account of the Nazarenes (and the Jewish christians never went by any other name) makes no mention of any of them believing the divinity of Christ, in any sense of the word.

It is particularly remarkable that Hegeſippus, in giving an account of the heresies of his time, though he mentions the Carpocratians, Valentinians, and others who were generally termed Gnostics (and who held that Christ had a pre-existence, and was man only in appearance) not only makes no mention of this supposed heresy of the Nazarenes or Ebionites, but says that, in his travels to Rome, where he spent some time with Anicetus, and visited the bishops of other sees, he found that they all held the same doctrine, that was taught in the law, by the prophets, and by our Lord. What could this be but the proper Unitarian doctrine, held by the Jews, and which he himself had been taught, though he had no doubt, a particular view to the tenets of the Gnostics which appeared in the earliest age, and which were strongly reprobated by the apostles and their followers?

That Eusebius doth not give this account of the primitive christian faith, is no wonder, considering his prejudice against the Unitarians of his own time. He speaks of the Ebionites, as persons whom a malignant demon had brought into his power, and though he speaks of them as holding

that Jesus was the son of Joseph, as well as of Mary, he speaks with no less virulence of the opinion of those of his time, who believed the miraculous conception, calling their heresy *madness*. Valesius, the translator of Eusebius, was of opinion that the history of Hegesippus was neglected and lost by the ancients, on account of the errors it contained, and these errors could be no other than the Unitarian doctrine. It is possible, also, that it might be less esteemed on account of the very plain unadorned style, in which all the ancients say it was written.

Almost all the ancient writers who speak of what they call the heretics of the two first centuries, say that they were of *two kinds*, the first those who thought that Christ was a man only in appearance, and the other that he was a mere man. Tertullian (A. D. 200) calls the former *Docetæ*, and the latter *Ebionites*. Augustine (A. D. 385) speaking of the same two sects, says, that the former believed Christ to be God, but denied that he was man, whereas the latter believed him to be man, but denied that he was God. Of this latter opinion Augustine owns that he himself was, till he became acquainted with the writings of Plato, which in his time were translated into Latin, and in which he learned the doctrine of the *Logos*.

Now that this second heresy, as the later writers called it, was really no heresy at all, but the plain, simple truth of the gospel, may be clearly inferred from the apostle John taking no notice at all of it, though he censures the former, who believed Christ to be a man only in appearance, in the severest manner. And that this was the only heresy that gave him any alarm, is evident from his first epistle, chap. iv. 3, where he says that *every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* (by which he must have meant, in opposition to the Gnostics, *is truly a man*) *is of God*. On the other hand, he says, *every spirit which confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world*. For this was the first corruption of the christian religion by the maxims of heathen philosophy, and which proceeded afterwards till christianity was brought to a state little better than paganism.

That christian writers in later times should imagine that this apostle alluded to the Unitarian heresy, or that of

the Ebionites, in the introduction to his gospel, is not to be wondered at; as nothing is more common than for men to interpret the writings of others according to their own previous ideas and conceptions of things. On the contrary, it seems very evident that, in that introduction, the apostle alludes to the very same system of opinions which he had censured in his epistle, the fundamental principle of which was, that, not the supreme Being himself, but an emanation from him, to which some gave the name of *Logos*, was the maker of all things; whereas he there affirms that the *Logos* by which all things were made, was not a being distinct from God, but God himself, that is, an attribute of God, or the divine power and wisdom. The Unitarians of the third century charged the orthodox with introducing a new and strange interpretation of the word *Logos* by supposing it to mean Christ.

That very system, indeed, which made Christ to have been the *eternal reason*, or *Logos* of the Father, did not, probably, exist in the time of the apostle John; but was introduced from the principles of Platonism afterwards. But the Valentinians, who were only a branch of the Gnostics, made great use of the same term, not only denominating by it one of the æons in the system described by Irenæus, but also one of them that was endowed by all the other æons with some extraordinary gift, to which person they gave the name of *Jesus, Savior, Christ, and Logos*.

The word *Logos* was also frequently used by them as synonymous to *æon*, in general, or an intelligence that sprung, mediately or immediately, from the divine essence. It is, therefore, almost certain, that the apostle John had frequently heard this term made use of, in some erroneous representations of the system of christianity that were current in his time, and therefore he might choose to introduce the same term in its proper sense, as an *attribute of the deity or God himself*, and not a distinct being that sprung from him. And this writer is not to be blamed if, afterwards, that very attribute was personified in a different manner, and not as a figure of speech, and consequently his language was made to convey a very different meaning from that which he affixed to it.

Athanasius (A. D. 330) himself was so far from denying that the primitive Jewish church was properly Unitarian, maintaining the simple humanity and not the divinity

of Christ, that he endeavors to account for it by saying, "that all the Jews were so firmly persuaded that their Messiah was to be nothing more than a man like themselves, that the apostles were obliged to use great caution in divulging the doctrine of the proper divinity of Christ." Many of the other early Christian writers give the same account of the caution with which they supposed the apostles taught the unpopular doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ. But what the apostles did not openly teach, I think we should be cautious how we believe. The apostles were never backward to combat other Jewish prejudices, and certainly would have opposed this opinion of theirs, if it had been an error. For if it had been an error at all, it must be allowed to have been an error of the greatest consequence.\*

Could it rouse the indignation of the apostle John so much as to call those *Antichrist*, who held that *Christ was not come in the flesh*, or was not truly man, and would he have passed uncensured those who denied the divinity of his Lord and master, if he himself had thought him to be true and very God, his maker, as well as his redeemer? We may therefore safely conclude that an opinion allowed to have prevailed in his time, and maintained by all the Jewish christians afterwards, was what he himself and the other apostles had taught them, and therefore that it is the very truth; and consequently that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, or of his being any more than a man, is an innovation, in whatever manner it may have been introduced.

Had the apostles explained themselves distinctly and fully, as its importance, if it had been true, required, on the subject of the *proper divinity of Christ*, as a person equal to the Father, it can never be imagined that the whole Jewish church, or any considerable part of it, should so very soon have adopted the opinion of his being a *mere man*. To add to the dignity of their master, was natural, but to take from it, and especially to degrade him from being *God*, to being *man*, must have been very unnatural. To make the Jews abandon the opinion of the divinity of Christ in the most qualified sense of the word, must at least have been as difficult as we find it to be to induce others to

\* Appendix B.

give up the same opinion at this day ; and there can be no question of their having, for some time, believed what the apostles taught on that, as well as on other subjects.

Of the same opinion with the Nazarenes, or Ebionites among the Jews, were those among the gentiles whom Epiphanius called *Alogi*, from their not receiving, as he says, the account that John gives of the *Logos*, and the writings of that apostle in general. But Lardner, with great probability supposes, there never was any such heresy as that of the *Alogi*, or rather that those to whom Epiphanius gave that name, were unjustly charged by him, with rejecting the writings of the apostle John, since no other person before him makes any mention of such a thing, and he produces nothing but mere hearsay in support of it. It is very possible, however, that he may give such an account of them, in consequence of their explaining the *Logos* in the introduction of John's gospel in a manner different from him, and others, who in that age had appropriated to themselves the name of orthodox.

Equally absurd is the conjecture of Epiphanius, that those persons, and others like them, were those that the apostle John meant by *Antichrist*. It is a much more natural inference that, since this writer allows these Unitarians to have been cotemporary with the apostles, and that they had no peculiar appellation till he himself gave them this of *Alogi* (and which he is very desirous that other writers would adopt after him) that they had not been deemed heretical in early times, but held the opinion of the ancient gentile church, as the Nazarenes did that of the Jewish church ; and that, notwithstanding the introduction, and gradual prevalence of the opposite doctrine, they were suffered to pass uncensured, and consequently without a name, till the smallness of their numbers made them particularly noticed.

It is remarkable, however, that those who held the simple doctrine of the humanity of Christ, without asserting that Joseph was his natural father, were not reckoned heretics by Irenæus, who wrote a large work on the subject of heresies (A. D. 172) ; and even those who held *that* opinion are mentioned with respect by Justin Martyr, who wrote some years before him, and who, indeed, is the first writer extant of the gentile christians, after the age of the apostles. And it cannot be supposed that he would have



treated them with so much respect, if their doctrine had not been very generally received, and on that account less obnoxious than it grew to be afterwards. He expresses their opinion concerning Christ, by saying that they made him to be a *mere man*, ψιλὸς ἀνθρώπος (*psilos anthropos*\*) and by this term Irenæus, and all the ancients, even later than Eusebius, meant *a man descended from man*, and this phraseology is frequently opposed to the doctrine of the miraculous conception of Jesus, and not to that of his divinity. It is not therefore to be inferred that because some of the ancient writers condemn the one, they meant to pass any censure upon the other.

The manner in which Justin Martyr (A. D. 140) speaks of those Unitarians who believed Christ to be the son of Joseph, is very remarkable, and shows that though they even denied the miraculous conception, they were far from being reckoned heretics in his time, as they were by Irenæus afterwards. He says, "there are some of our profession who acknowledged him" (Jesus) "to be the Christ, yet maintain that he was a man born of man. I do not agree with them, nor should I be prevailed upon by ever so many who hold that opinion; because we are taught by Christ himself not to receive our doctrine from men, but from what was taught by the holy prophets and by himself."

This language has all the appearance of an *apology* for an opinion contrary to the general and prevailing one, as that of the humanity of Christ (at least with the belief of the miraculous conception) probably was in his time. This writer even speaks of his own opinion of the pre-existence of Christ (and he is the first that we certainly know to have maintained it, on the principles on which it was generally received afterwards) as a doubtful one, and by no means a necessary article of christian faith. "Jesus," says he "may still be the Christ of God, though I should not be able to prove his pre-existence, as the son of God who made all things. For though I should not prove that he had pre-existed, it will be right to say that, in this respect only I have been deceived, and not to deny that he is the Christ if he appears to be a man born of men, and to have be

\* We prefer to use the English spelling of the Greek word as being more familiar to the English reader.

"come Christ by election." This is not the language of a man very confident of his opinion, and who had the sanction of the majority along with him.

The reply of Trypho the Jew, with whom the dialogue he is writing is supposed to be held, is also remarkable, showing in what light the Jews will always consider any doctrine which makes Christ to be more than a man. He says, "They who think that Jesus was a man, and, being chosen of God, was anointed Christ, appear to me to advance a more probable opinion than yours. For all of us expect that Christ will be born a man from man (*anthropos ex anthropou*) and that Elias will come to anoint him. If he therefore be Christ, he must by all means be a man born of man."

It is well known, and mentioned by Eusebius, that the Unitarians in the primitive church, always pretended to be the oldest christians, that the apostles themselves had taught their doctrine, and that it generally prevailed till the time of Zephyrinus bishop of Rome, but that from that time it was corrupted; and as these ancient Unitarians are called *Idiotæ* (i. e. common and unlettered people) by Tertullian, it is more natural to look for ancient opinions among them, than among the learned, who are more apt to innovate. With such apparent unfairness does Eusebius, or a more ancient writer whose sentiments he adopts, treat these Unitarians, as to say that Theodotus, who appeared about the year 190, and who was condemned by Victor the predecessor of Zephyrinus, was the first who held that our Savior was a mere man; when in refuting their pretensions to antiquity, he goes no farther back than to Irenæus and Justin Martyr; though in his own writings alone he might have found a refutation of his assertion. Epiphanius, speaking of the same Theodotus, says that his heresy was a branch (*apospasma*) of that of the *Alogi*, which sufficiently implies that they existed before him.

The *Alogi*, therefore, appear to have been the earliest gentile christians, and Berriman supposes them to have been a branch of the Ebionites. In fact, they must have been the same among the gentiles, that the Ebionites were among the Jews. And it is remarkable that as the children of Israel retained the worship of the one true God all the time of Joshua, and of those of his cotemporaries who outlived him; so the generality of christians retained the

same faith, believing the strict unity of God, and the proper humanity of Christ, all the time of the apostles, and of those who conversed with them, but began to depart from that doctrine presently afterwards; and the defection advanced so fast, that in about one century more, the original doctrine was generally reprobated by the more learned christians, and deemed heretical. The manner in which this corruption of the ancient doctrine was introduced, I must now proceed to explain.

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## SECTION II.

### OF THE FIRST STEP THAT WAS MADE TOWARDS THE DEIFICATION OF CHRIST, BY THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE LOGOS.

As the greatest things often take their rise from the smallest beginnings, so the worst things sometimes proceed from good intentions. This was certainly the case with respect to the origin of christian idolatry. All the early heresies arose from men who wished well to the gospel, and who meant to recommend it to the heathens, and especially to philosophers among them, whose prejudices they found great difficulty in conquering. Now we learn from the writings of the apostles themselves, as well as from the testimony of later writers, that the circumstance at which mankind in general, and especially the more philosophical part of them stumbled the most, was the doctrine of a *crucified Savior*. They could not submit to become the disciples of a man who had been exposed upon a cross like the vilest malefactor. Of this objection to christianity we find traces in all the early writers, who wrote in defence of the gospel against the unbelievers of their age, to the time of Lactantius; and probably it may be found much later. He says, "I know that many fly from the truth out of their abhorrence of the cross." We, who only learn from *history*, that crucifixion was a kind of death to which slaves, and the vilest of malefactors, were exposed, can but very imperfectly enter into their prejudices, so as to feel what they must have done with respect to it. The idea of a man

executed at Tyburn, without any thing to distinguish him from other malefactors, is but an approach to the case of our Savior.

The apostle Paul speaks of the crucifixion of Christ as the great obstacle to the reception of the gospel in his time ; and yet, with true magnanimity, he does not go about to palliate the matter, but says to the Corinthians (some of the politest people among the Greeks, and fond of their philosophy) that "he was determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and him crucified:" for though this circumstance was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, it was to others the power of God and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor. i. 23. For this circumstance at which they cavilled was that in which the wisdom of God was most conspicuous; the death and resurrection of a man, in all respects like themselves, being better calculated to give other men an assurance of their own resurrection, than that of any superangelic being, the laws of whose nature they might think to be very different from those of their own. But "*as by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*"—1 Cor. xv. 21.

Later christians, however, and especially those who were themselves attached to the principles of either the oriental or the Greek philosophy, unhappily took another method of removing this obstacle ; and instead of explaining the wisdom of the divine dispensations in the appointment of a man, a person *in all respects like unto his brethren*, for the redemption of *men*, and of his dying in the most public and indisputable manner, as a foundation for the clearest proof of a real resurrection, and also of a painful and ignominious death, as an example to his followers who might be exposed to the same, &c. &c. they began to raise the dignity of the *person* of Christ, that it might appear less disgraceful to be ranked among his disciples. To make this the easier to them, two things chiefly contributed, the first was the received method of interpreting the scriptures among the learned Jews, and the second was the philosophical opinions of the heathen world, which had then begun to infect the Jews themselves.

It has been observed that after the translation of the Old Testament into Greek, which was done probably in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, (B. C. 273) in consequence of which the Jewish religion became bet-

ter known to the Greeks, and especially to the philosophers of Alexandria, the more learned of the Jews had recourse to an allegorical method of interpreting what they found to be most objected to in their sacred writings; and by this means pretended to find in the books of Moses, and the prophets, all the great principles of the Greek philosophy, and especially that of Plato, which at that time was most in vogue. In this method of interpreting scripture, Philo, a learned Jew of Alexandria, far excelled all who had gone before him; but the christians of that city, who were themselves deeply tinctured with the principles of the same philosophy, especially Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen, who both believed in the pre-existence of souls, and the other distinguishing tenets of Platonism, soon followed his steps in the interpretation of both the Old and the New Testament.

One method of allegorizing, which took its rise in the East, was the personification of things without life, of which we have many beautiful examples, in the books of scripture, as of *wisdom*, by Solomon, of *the dead*, by Ezekiel, and of *sin* and *death*, by the apostle Paul. Another method of allegorizing was finding out resemblances in things that bore some relation to each other, and then representing them as *types* and *antitypes* to each other. The apostle Paul, especially if he be the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, has strained very much, by the force of imagination, to reconcile the Jews to the christian religion, by pointing out the *analogies* which he imagined the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion bore to something in christianity. Clemens Romanus, but more especially Barnabas, pushed this method of alegorizing still farther. But the Fathers who followed them, by employing both the methods, and mixing their own philosophy with christianity, at length converted an innocent allegory into what was little better than pagan idolatry.

It had long been the received doctrine of the East, and had gradually spread into the western parts of the world, that besides the supreme divine mind, which had existed without cause from all eternity, there were other intelligences, of a less perfect nature, which had been produced by way of *emanation* from the great original mind, and that other intelligences, less and less perfect, had, in like manner, proceeded from them: in short, that all spirits, wheth-

er demons, or the souls of men, were of this divine origin. It was supposed by some of them, that even *matter* itself, which they considered as the source of all evil, had, in this intermediate manner, derived its existence from the deity, though others supposed matter to have been eternal and self-existent. For it was a maxim with them all, that "nothing could be created out of nothing." In this manner they thought they could best account for the origin of evil, without supposing it to be the immediate production of a good being, which the original divine mind was always supposed by them to be.

In order to exalt their idea of Jesus Christ, it being then a received opinion among the philosophers that all souls had pre-existed, they conceived his soul, not to have been that of a common man (which were generally supposed to have been the production of inferior beings) but a principal *emanation* from the divine mind itself, and that an intelligence of so high a rank either animated the body of Jesus from the beginning, or entered into him at his baptism. There was, however, a great diversity of opinion on this subject; and indeed there was room enough for it, in a system which was not founded on any observation, but was the mere creature of fancy. But all these philosophizing christians had the same general object, which was to make the religion of Christ more reputable, by adding to the dignity of our Lord's person.

Thus, according to Lardner, Cerinthus, one of the first of these philosophizing christians, taught that there was one supreme God, but that the world was not made by him, but by angels; that Jesus was a man born of Joseph and Mary, and that at his baptism the Holy Spirit, or the Christ, descended upon him; that Jesus died and rose again, but that the Christ was impassible. On the other hand, Marcion held that Christ was not born at all, but that the son of God took the exterior form of man, without being born, or gradually growing up to a proper size, and showed himself at once in Gallilee, a man full grown. All the heretics, however, of this class, whose philosophy was more properly that of the East, thought it was unworthy of so exalted a person as the proper *Christ* to be truly a man, and most of them thought he had no real flesh, but only the appearance of it, and was incapable of feeling pain, &c.

These opinions the Apostles, and especially John, had

heard of, and he rejected them, as we have seen, with the greatest indignation. However, this did not put a stop to the evil, those philosophizing christians either having ingenuity enough to evade those censures, by pretending it was not *their* opinions, but others somewhat different from theirs, that properly fell under them; or new opinions really different from them, but derived in fact from the same source, and having the same evil tendency, rising up in the place of them: for they were all calculated to give more dignity, as they imagined, to the person of their master. The most remarkable change in these opinions was that, whereas the earliest of these philosophizing christians supposed, in general, that the world was made by some superior intelligence of no benevolent nature, and that the Jewish religion was prescribed by the same being, or one very much resembling him, and that Christ was sent to rectify the imperfections of both systems; those who succeeded them, and whose success at length gave them the title of orthodox, corrupted the genuine christian principle no less, by supposing that Christ was the being who, under God, was himself the maker of the world, and the medium of all the divine communications to man, and therefore the author of the Jewish religion.

As Plato had travelled into the East it is probable that he there learned the doctrine of divine emanations, and got his ideas of the origin of this visible system. But he sometimes expresses himself so temperately on the subject, that he seems to have only allegorized what is true with respect to it; speaking of the divine mind as having existed from eternity, but having within itself *ideas* or *archetypes* of whatever was to exist without it, and saying that the immediate seat of these ideas, or the intelligence which he styled *nous*, and which Philo termed *Logos*, was that from which the visible creation immediately sprung. However, it was to this principle in the divine mind, or this Being derived from it, that Plato, according to Lactantius, gave the name of a *second God*, saying, "the Lord and maker of the universe, whom we justly call God, made a second God visible and sensible."

By this means, however, it was, that this *Logos*, originally an *attribute* of the divine mind itself, came to be represented, first by the philosophers, and then by philosophizing christians, as an *intelligent principle*, or *being*, distinct

from God, though an emanation from him. This doctrine was but too convenient for those who wished to recommend the religion of Christ. Accordingly, they immediately fixed upon this *Logos* as the intelligence which was in some inexplicable manner united to his soul, and by the help of the allegorical method of interpreting the scriptures, to which they had been sufficiently accustomed, they easily found authorities there for their opinions.

Thus, since we read in the book of Psalms, that *by the word of the Lord* (which, in the translation of the Seventy, is the *Logos*) *the Heavens were made, &c.* they concluded that this *Logos* was Christ, and therefore that, under God, he was the maker of the world. They also applied to him what Solomon says of *wisdom*, in the book of Proverbs, as having been, *in the beginning with God*, and employed by him in making the world. But there is one particular passage in the book of Psalms, in which they imagined that the origin of the *Logos*, by way of emanation from the divine mind, is most clearly expressed, which is what we render, *My heart is inditing a good matter.*—Psalm xlv. 1, this *matter* being *Logos* in the Seventy, and the verb *ereugomenos* (*throwing out*) being made use of, they render it, *My heart throws out the Logos.* Nothing can appear to us more ungrounded than this supposition, and yet we find it in all the writers who treat of the divinity of Christ for several centuries in ecclesiastical history. After this we cannot wonder at their being at no loss for proofs of their doctrine in any part of scripture.

But Philo the Jew went before the christians in the personification of the *Logos*, and in this mode of interpreting what is said of it in the Old Testament. For he calls this divine word *a second God*, and sometimes attributes the creation of the world to this second God, thinking it below the majesty of the great God himself. He also calls this personified attribute of God his *protogonos*, or his *first born*, and the *image of God*. He says that he is neither unbegotten, like God, nor begotten as we are, but the middle between the two extremes. We also find that the Chaldee paraphrasts of the Old Testament often render the *word of God*, as if it was a being distinct from God, or some angel who bore the name of God, and acted by deputation from him. So, however, it hath been interpreted, though with them it might be no more than an idiom of speech.



The christian philosophers having once got the idea that the *Logos* might be interpreted of Christ, proceeded to explain what John says of the *Logos* in the introduction of his gospel to mean the same person, in direct opposition to what he really meant, which was that the *Logos*, by which all things were made, was not a being distinct from God, but God himself, being his attribute, his wisdom and power, dwelling in Christ, speaking and acting by him. Accordingly we find some of the earlier Unitarians charging those who were called orthodox with an innovation in their interpretation of the term *Logos*. "But thou wilt tell me something strange, in saying that the *Logos* is the Son." *Hippolytus contra Noetum*, quoted by Beausobre.

We find nothing like *divinity*\* ascribed to Christ before Justin Martyr (A. D. 141) who from being a philosopher became a christian, but always retained the peculiar habit of his former profession. As to Clemens Romanus, who was cotemporary with the apostles, when he is speaking in the highest terms concerning Christ, he only calls him *the sceptre of the majesty of God*. Whether Justin Martyr was the very first who started the notion of Christ being the *Logos* of the Father, is not certain, but we are not able to trace it any higher. We find it, indeed, briefly mentioned in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, but though this is supposed by some to be the Hermas mentioned by Paul, and to have been written towards the end of the first century, others suppose this to be the work of one Hermes, brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, and to have been written about the year 141, or perhaps later; and as this work contains such a pretension to visions and revelations, as is unworthy of the Hermas mentioned by Paul, I cannot help being of this opinion. He says, "having seen an old rock and a new gate, they represent the son of God, who was more ancient than any creature, so as to be present with the Father at the creation, *ad condendam creaturam*." The book was written in Greek, but we have only a Latin version of it.

Justin Martyr being a philosopher, and writing an apology for christianity to a philosophical Roman Emperor, would naturally wish to represent it in what would appear to him and other philosophers, in the most favorable light; and this disposition appears by several circumstances.

Thus he represents virtuous men, in all preceding ages, as being in a certain sense *christians*; and apologizing for calling Christ the *son of God* he says, that "this cannot be new to them who speak of Jupiter as having sons, and especially of Mercury, as his interpreter, and the instructor of all men," (*logon ermeeneutikon kai pantone didaskalon.*) On the same subject he says, "If Christ be a mere man, yet he deserves to be called the son of God, on account of his wisdom; and the heathens called God (i. e. Jupiter) the father of Gods and men; and if, in an extraordinary manner, he be the *Logos* of God, this is common with those who call Mercury the *Logos* that declares the will of God," (*logon ton para theou angelikon.*)

With this disposition to make his religion appear in the most respectable light to the heathens, and having himself professed the doctrine of Plato, can it be thought extraordinary, that he eagerly caught at the doctrine of the *Logos*, which he found ready formed to his hands in the works of Philo, and that he introduced it into the christian system; that Irenæus, who was also educated among the philosophers, about the same time, did the same thing; or that others, who were themselves sufficiently predisposed to act the same part, should follow their example?

That the doctrine of the separate divinity of Christ was at first nothing more than a personification of a divine attribute, or of that wisdom and power by which God made the world, is evident from the manner in which the earliest writers who treat of the subject mention it. Justin Martyr, who was the first who undertook to prove that Christ was the medium of the divine dispensations in the Old Testament, as that, "he was the person sometimes called an *Angel*, and sometimes *God*, and *Lord*, and that he was the *man* who sometimes appeared to Abraham and Jacob, and he that spake to Moses from the fiery bush," does it, as we have seen above, with a considerable degree of diffidence; saying that, "if he should not be able to prove his pre-existence, it would not therefore follow that he was not the Christ." And as new opinions do not readily lay firm hold on the mind, forms of expression adapted to preceding opinions will now and then occur, and as good sense will, in all cases, often get the better of imagination, we sometimes find these early writers drop the personification of the *Logos*, and speak of it as the mere attribute of God.

Thus Theophilus, who was cotemporary with Justin, though a later writer, says, that when God said *Let us make man*, he spake to nothing but his own *Logos* and wisdom; and according to Origen, Christ was the eternal reason, or wisdom of God. He says, that, "by the second God, we mean only a virtue" (or perhaps power) "which comprehends all other virtues, or a reason which comprehends all other reasons, and that this reason (*logos*) is particularly attached to the soul of Christ." Also explaining John i. 3, he says, "God can do nothing without reason (*para logon*) i. e. without himself" (*par' eauton*.)

Athenegoras, who wrote in the second century, calls Christ, the first production (*genneema*) of the Father; but says he was not always actually produced, (*genomenon*) for that from the beginning God, being an eternal mind, had reason (*logos*) in himself, being from eternity rational (*logikos*.)

Tatian, who was also his cotemporary, gives us a fuller account of this matter. He says, "when he (that is, God) pleased, the word (*Logos*) flowed from his simple essence; and this word not being produced in vain, became the first begotten work of his spirit. This we know to be the origin of the word: but it was produced by *division*, not by *separation*, for that which is divided (*meristhen*) does not diminish that from which it derives its power. For as many torches may be lighted from one, and yet the light of the first torch is not diminished, so the word (*Logos*) proceeding from the power of the Father, does not leave the Father void of *Logos*. Also, if I speak and you hear me, I am not void of speech (*Logos*) on account of my speech (*Logos*) going to you."

If Irenæus had this idea of the generation of the *Logos*, as no doubt he had, it is no wonder that he speaks of it as a thing of so wonderful a nature. "If any one," says he, "asks us, how is the Son produced from the Father, we tell him that whether it be called *generation*, *nuncupation*, or *adapertion*, or by whatever other name this ineffable generation be called, no one knows it; neither Valentinus, nor Marcion nor Saturninus, nor Basilides, nor Angels, nor Archangels, nor Principalities, nor Powers; but only the Father who begat, and the Son who is begotten."

Tertullian, whose orthodoxy in this respect was never questioned, does not seem, however, to have any difficulty

in conceiving how this business was, but writes in such a manner, as if he had been let into the whole secret; and we see in him the wretched expedients to which the orthodox of that age had recourse, in order to convert a mere *attribute* into a *real person*. For it must be understood when the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was first started, it was not pretended, except by Irenæus in the passage above quoted (who was writing against persons who pretended to more knowledge of this mysterious business than himself) that there was any thing *unintelligible* in it, or that could not be explained. Every thing, indeed, in that age was called a *mystery* that was reputed *sacred*, and the knowledge of which was confined to a few; but the idea of *unintelligible*, or *inexplicable* was not then affixed to the word *mystery*. The heathen mysteries, from which the christians borrowed the term, were things perfectly well known, and understood by those who were *initiated*, though concealed from the vulgar.

“Before all things,” says this writer, “God was alone; but not absolutely alone, for he had with him his own *reason*, since God is a rational being. This reason the Greeks call *Logos*, which word we now render *sermo*. And that you may more easily understand this from yourself, consider that you, who are made in the image of God, have reason within yourself. When you silently consider with yourself, it is by means of reason that you do it.”

On this stating of the case, it was natural to object, that the reason of a man can never be converted into a *substance*, so as to constitute a thinking being, distinct from the man himself. But, he says, that though this is the case with respect to man, yet nothing can proceed from God but what is substantial. “You will say,” says he, “but what is *speech* besides a *word* or *sound*, something unsubstantial and incorporeal. But I say that nothing unsubstantial and incorporeal can proceed from God, because it does not proceed from what is itself unsubstantial; nor can that want substance, which proceeds from so great a substance.”

Having, in this manner (lame enough, to be sure) got over the great difficulty of the conversion of a mere *attribute* into a *substance*, and a thinking substance too, this writer proceeds to ascertain the time when this conversion

took place; and he, together with all the early Fathers, says that it was at the very instant of the creation. "Then," says he, "did this speech assume its *form* and *dress*, its *sound* and *voice* when God said, *Let there be light*. This "is the perfect nativity of the *word*, when it *proceeded from God*. From this time making him equal to himself," (by which phrase, however, we are only to understand *like himself*) "from which procession he became his son, his first born, and only begotten, begotten before all things."

This method of explaining the origin of the personality of the *Logos* continued to the council of Nice, and even afterwards. For Lactantius, who was tutor to the son of Constantine, gives us the same account of this business, with some little variation, teaching us to distinguish the son of God from the angels, whom he likewise conceived to be emanations from the divine mind. "How," says he, "did he beget him?" (that is, Christ). "The sacred scriptures inform us that the son of God is the *sermo*, or *ratio* (the speech or reason) of God; also, that the other angels are the breath of God *spiritus dei*. But *sermo* (speech) is breath emitted, together with a *voice*, expressive of something; and because *speech* and *breathing* proceed from different parts, there is a great difference between the son of God, and the other angels. For they are mere *silent breathings* (*spiritus taciti*) because they were created not to teach the knowledge of God, but for *service* (*ad ministrandum*). But he being also a *breathing* (*spiritus*) yet proceeding from the mouth of God with a voice and sound, is the *word*; for this reason, because he was to be a teacher of the knowledge of God," &c. He therefore calls him *spiritus vocalis*. Then, in order to account for our breathings not producing similar spirits, he says, that, "our breathings are *dissoluble*, because we are mortal, but the breathings of God are permanent; they live and feel, because he is immortal, the giver of sense and life."

All the early Fathers speak of Christ as not having existed always, except as reason exists in man (*viz.*) an attribute of the deity; and for this reason they speak of the Father as not being a Father always, but only from the time that he made the world. "Before any thing was made," says Theophilus, God had the "*Logos* for his council; being his *nous* or *phronesis* (*reason* or *understanding*) but "but when he proceeded to produce what he had determin-

“ed upon, he then emitted the *Logos*, the first born of every creature, not emptying himself of *Logos* (reason) but “*logon gennesas* (begetting reason) and always conversing “with his own *Logos*” (reason).

Justin Martyr also gives the same explanation of the emission of the *Logos* from God, without depriving himself of reason, and he illustrates it by what we observe in ourselves. For “in uttering any word,” he says, we beget a word (*Logos*) not taking any thing from ourselves, so as to be lessened by it, but as we see one fire produced from another.

Clemens Alexandrinus calls the Father alone *without beginning* (*anarchos*) and immediately after he characterizes the Son, as the *beginning*, and the *first fruits* of things (*archeen kai aparcheen tone ontone*) from whom we must learn the Father of all, the most ancient and beneficent of beings. Tertullian expressly says that “God was not always a father, or a judge, since he could not be a father before he had a son, nor a judge before sin; and there was a time when both *sin* and the *son* (which made God to be a *judge* and a *father*) were not.

This language was held at the time of the council of Nice, for Lactantius says, “God, before he undertook the making of the world, produced a holy and incorruptible spirit, which he might call his *Son*; and afterwards he by him created innumerable other spirits, whom he calls *angels*.” “The church,” says Hilary, “knows one unbegotten God, and one only begotten Son of God. It acknowledges the Father to be without origin, and it acknowledges the origin of the Son from eternity, not himself without beginning, but from him who is without beginning (*ab ininitiabili*).” It is not impossible that Hilary might have an idea of the eternal generation of the Son, though the Fathers before the council of Nice had no such idea. For the Platonists in general thought that the creation was from eternity, there never having been any time in which the divine Being did not act. But in general, by the phrase *from eternity*, and *before all time*, &c. the ancient christian writers seem to have meant any period before the creation of the world.

Consistently with this representation, but very inconsistently with the modern doctrine of the Trinity, the Fathers supposed the son of God to have been begotten *voluntarily*,

so that it depended upon the Father himself whether he would have a son or not. "I will produce you another testimony from the scriptures," says Justin Martyr, "that in the beginning, before all the creatures, God begat from himself a certain reasonable power (*dunamin-logikeen*) who by the spirit is sometimes called *the glory of God*, sometimes *God*, sometimes the *Lord* and *Logos*, because he is subservient to his Father's will, and was begotten at his Father's pleasure."

Novatus says, "God the Father is therefore the maker and creator of all things, who alone hath no origin, invisible, immense, immortal, and eternal, the one God, to whose greatness and majesty nothing can be compared, from whom, when he himself pleased, the word (*Sermo*) was born." Eusebius, quoted by Dr Clarke, says, though light does not shine at the will of the luminous body from the necessary property of its nature; the Son became the image of his Father from his will and choice; for God at his pleasure (*bouleetheis*) became the Father of the Son.

The Fathers of the council of Sirmium say, "If any say that the Son was not begotten at the will of the Father, let him be an anathema. For the Father, did not beget the Son by a physical necessity of nature, without the operation of his will, but he at once willed, and begat the Son, and produced him from himself, without all time, and without suffering any diminution from himself." Hilary mentions his approbation of this sentiment, but we shall see that Austin corrects him for it. A strong passage in favor of the voluntary production of the son of God may also be seen quoted from Gregory Nyssen, by Dr Clarke, in the place above referred to.

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### SECTION III.

THAT SUPREMACY WAS ALWAYS ASCRIBED TO THE FATHER BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

WE find on all occasions the early christian writers speak of the Father as superior to the Son, and in general they

give him the title of *God*, as distinguished from the Son; and sometimes they expressly call him, exclusively of the Son, *the only true God*; a phraseology which does not at all accord with the idea of the perfect equality of all the persons in the Trinity. But it might well be expected, that the advances to the present doctrine of the Trinity would be gradual and slow. It was, indeed, some centuries before it was completely formed.

It is not a little amusing to observe how the Fathers of the second, third, and fourth centuries were embarrassed with the heathens on the one hand, to whom they wished to recommend their religion, by exalting the person of its founder, and with the ancient Jewish and Gentile converts (whose prejudices against polytheism, they also wished to guard against) on the other. Willing to conciliate the one, and yet not to offend the other, they are particularly careful at the same time that they give the appellation of *God* to Jesus Christ, to distinguish between him and the Father, giving a decided superiority to the latter. Of this I think it may be worth while to produce a number of examples, from the time that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was first started, to the time of the council of Nice; for till that time, and even something later, did this language continue to be used. Clemens Romanus never calls Christ, *God*. He says, "Have we not all one God, and one Christ, and "one spirit of grace poured upon us all?" which is exactly the language of the apostle Paul, with whom he was in part cotemporary.

Justin Martyr, who is the first that we can find to have advanced the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, says, "He who appeared to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob, "was subordinate to the Father, and minister to his will." He even says, that "the Father is the author to him both "of his existence, and of his being powerful, and of his "being Lord and God."

"All the evangelists," says Irenæus, have delivered to us "the doctrine of one God, and one Christ the son of God;" and invoking the Father he calls him the only God; and according to several of the most considerable of the early christian writers, a common epithet by which the Father is distinguished from the Son, is that he alone is (*autotheos*) or *God of himself*.

Origen, quoted by Dr Clarke, says, "to them who charge



“us that we believe two Gods, we must reply, that he who is God of himself (*autotheos*) is *the God (o theos)* for which reason our Savior says, in his prayer to the Father, *that they may know thee the only true God*. But whatever is God besides him who is so *of himself*, being God only by a communication of his divinity, cannot so properly be called (*o theos*) *the God*, but rather (*theos*) God.” The same observation had before been made by Clemens Alexandrinus, who also calls the son a *creature*, and the *work of God*. Origen also says, “According to our doctrine, the God and Father of all is not alone *great*: for he has communicated of his greatness to the first begotten of all the creation,” (*prototoko pasees ktiseose.*)

Novatus says, that “the Sabellians make too much of the divinity of the Son, when they say it is that of the Father, extending his honor beyond bounds. They dare to make him not the Son, but God the Father himself. And again, they acknowledge the divinity of Christ in too boundless and unrestrained a manner.” (*effrenatus et effusius in Christo divinitatem confiteri.*) The same writer also says, “The Son to whom the divinity is communicated is, indeed God; but God the Father of all is deservedly *God of all*, and the origin (*principium*) of his Son, whom he begat *Lord*.”

Arnobius says, “Christ, a God, under the form of a man, speaking by the order of the principal God. Again, then, at length, did God Almighty, the only God, send Christ.”

Such language as this was held till the time of the council of Nice. Alexander, who is very severe upon Eusebius bishop of Nicomedia, who was charged with favoring Arianism, says in his circular letter to the bishops, “the Son is of a middle nature between the first cause of all things, and the creatures, which were created out of nothing.” Athanasius himself, as quoted by Dr Clarke, says, “the nature of God is the cause both of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and of all creatures.” He also says, “There is but one God, because the Father is but one, yet is the son also God, having such a sameness as that of a Son to a Father.”

Lactantius says, “Christ taught that there is one God, and that he alone ought to be worshipped; neither did he ever call himself God, because he would not have been true to his trust, if being sent to take away gods (that is,



“*is greater than I.*” It is also remarkable, as Mr Whiston observes, that the ancient Fathers, both Greek and Latin, never interpret Phil. ii. 6, to mean an equality of the Son to the Father. Novatus says, “he therefore, though he was in the form of God, did not make himself equal to God (*non est rapinam arbitratus equalem se deo esse*) for though he remembered he was God, of God the Father, he never compared himself to God the Father, being mindful that he was of his Father, and that he had this because his Father gave it him.”

It also deserves to be noticed, that notwithstanding the supposed derivation of the son from the Father, and therefore their being of *the same substance*, most of the early Christian writers thought the text *I and my Father are one*, was to be understood of an unity or harmony of *disposition* only. Thus Tertullian observes, that the expression is *unum, one thing*, not *one person*; and he explains it to mean *unity, likeness, conjunction*, and of the *love that the Father bore to the Son*. Origen says, let him consider that text, *all that believed were of one heart and of one soul*, and then he will understand this, *I and my Father are one*. Novatus says *one thing (unum)* being in the neuter gender, signifies an agreement of society, not an unity of person, and he explains it by this passage in Paul, *he that planteth and he that watereth are both one*. But the Fathers of the council of Sardica, held A. D. 347, reprobated the opinion that the union of the Father and Son consists in consent and concord only, apprehending it to be a *strict unity of substance*; so much farther was the doctrine of the Trinity advanced at that time.

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## SECTION IV.

OF THE DIFFICULTY WITH WHICH THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST WAS ESTABLISHED.

It is sufficiently evident from many circumstances, that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ did not establish itself without much opposition, especially from the *unlearned*

among the christians, who thought that it savored of *polytheism*, that it was introduced by those who had had a philosophical education, and was by degrees adopted by others, on account of its covering the great *offence of the cross*, by exalting the personal dignity of our Savior.

To make the new doctrine less exceptionable, the advocates for it invented a new term, viz. *œconomy*, or *distribution*, as it may be rendered; saying they were far from *denying the unity of God*; but that there was a certain *œconomy*, or distribution respecting the divine nature and attributes which did not interfere with it; for that according to this *œconomy* the Son might be God, without detracting from the supreme divinity of the Father. But this new term, it appears, was not well understood, or easily relished, by those who called themselves the advocates for the *monarchy of the Father*, a term much used in those days, to denote the supremacy and sole divinity of the Father, in opposition to that of the Son. All this is very clear from the following passage in Tertullian:

“The simple, the ignorant, and the unlearned, who are always the greater part of the body of christians, since the rule of faith itself” (meaning perhaps the *apostles’ creed*, or as much of it as was in use in his time) “transfer their worship of many gods to the one true God, not understanding that the unity of God is to be maintained, but with the *œconomy*, dread this *œconomy*, imagining that this number and disposition of a Trinity is a division of the unity. They therefore will have it, that we are worshippers of two, and even of three Gods; but that they are the worshippers of one God only. We, they say, hold the *monarchy*. Even the Latins have learned to bawl out for monarchy, and the Greeks themselves will not understand the *œconomy* ;” monarchy being a Greek term, and yet adopted by the Latins, and *œconomy*, though a Greek term, not being relished even by the Greek christians.

On another occasion we see by this writer how offensive the word *Trinity* was to the generality of christians. “Does the number of Trinity still shock you?” says he. For this reason, no doubt, Origen says, “that to the carnal they taught the gospel in a literal way, preaching Jesus Christ, and him crucified, but to persons farther advanced, and burning with love for divine celestial wis-

"dom," (by which he must mean the philosophical part of their audience) "they communicated the *Logos*."

Origen candidly calls these adherents to the doctrine of the strict unity of God pious persons (*philotheous*). "Hence," says he, we may solve the scruple of many pious persons, "who through fear lest they should make two Gods, fall into false and wicked notions." He endeavors to relieve them in this manner: "This scruple of many pious persons may thus be solved. We must tell them, that he who is God of himself (*autotheos*) is God with the article (*o theos*) but that Christ is God without the article (*theos*)," as was observed before. How far this solution of the difficulty was satisfactory to these pious unlearned christians does not appear. It does not seem calculated to remove a difficulty of any great magnitude.

That these ancient Unitarians, under all the names by which their adversaries thought proper to distinguish them, have been greatly misrepresented, is acknowledged by all who are candid among the moderns. The learned Beausobre, himself a Trinitarian, is satisfied it was a zeal for the unity of God that actuated the Sabellians (who were no more than Unitarians under a particular denomination.) Epiphanius says, that when a Sabellian met the orthodox he would say, "My friends, do we believe one God, or three?"

Eusebius, speaking with great wrath against Marcellus of Ancyra, allows that he did not deny the personality of the Son, but for fear of establishing two Gods. This also appears from the manner in which Eusebius expresses himself when he answers to the charge of introducing two Gods. "But you are afraid perhaps (*phobee*) lest, acknowledging two distinct *hypostases*, you should introduce two original principles, and so destroy the monarchy of God."

Basil complains of the popularity of the followers of Marcellus, whose disciple Photinus is said to have been; at the same time that the name of Arius was execrated. "Unto this very time," says he, in his letter to Athanasius, "in all their letters they fail not to anathematize the hated name of Arius; but with Marcellus, who has profanely taken away the very existence of the divinity of the only begotten Son, and abused the signification of the word *Logos*, with this man they seem to find no fault at all."

It was impossible not to perceive that this *aeconomy*, and the style and rank of *God*, given to Christ, made a system, entirely different from that of the Jews, as laid down in the Old Testament. For christians either had not at that time laid much stress on any argument for the doctrine of the Trinity drawn from the books of Moses, or at least had not been able to satisfy the Jews or the Jewish christians, with any representations of that kind. Tertullian, therefore, makes another, and indeed a very bold attempt for the same purpose; saying that it was peculiar to the Jewish faith so to maintain the unity of God, as not to admit the Son or Spirit to any participation of the divinity with him; but that it was the characteristic of the gospel, to introduce the Son and Spirit, as making one God with the Father. He says, that God was determined to renew his covenant in this *new form*. I shall give his own words, which are much more copious on the subject, in a note.\*

When the philosophizing christians went beyond the mere personification of a divine attribute, and proceeded to speak of the *real substance*, as I may say, of the divine *Logos*, they were evidently in danger of making a diversity, or a separation in the divine nature. That the common people did make this very objection to the new doctrine is clearly intimated by Tertullian "When I say that the Father is one, the Son another, and the Spirit a third, an unlearned, or perverse person, understands me as if I meant a *diversity*, and in this diversity he pretends that there must be a separation of the Father, Son and Spirit."

The objection is certainly not ill stated. Let us now consider how this writer answers it: for at this time it was not pretended that the subject was above human comprehension, or that it could not be explained by proper comparisons. In order, therefore, to show that the Son and

\* It is the stress of the Jewish faith so to hold to a belief in one God as to throw out the Son, and after the Son, the Spirit. How do we differ from that dispensation except upon this point? Why was the Gospel needed, if thenceforth the Father, Son, and Spirit, did not compose one God? God intended to renew his covenant in this way, so that One should be believed in anew through the Son and the Spirit, and God now be openly recognized in his peculiar titles and characteristics, whereas formerly he had not been understood as held forth in the Son and Spirit.

Spirit might be produced from the Father, and yet not be separated from him, he says that God produced the *Logos* (*Sermonem*) as the root of a tree produces the branch, as a fountain produces the river, or the sun a beam of light. The last of these comparisons is also adopted by Athenagoras in his Apology, in which he describes a beam of light, as a thing not detached from the sun, but as flowing out of it, and back to it again. For Hierarchas had been censured for comparing the production of the Son from the Father to the lighting of one candle at another, because the second candle was a thing subsisting of itself, and entirely separated from the former so as to be incompatible with unity.

Justin Martyr, however, as we have seen, made use of the same comparison, and as far as appears, without censure. But after his time the ideas of philosophizing christians had undergone a change. He and his cotemporaries were only solicitous to make out something like divinity in the Son, without considering him as united in one substance with the Father, the unity of God being then defended on no other principle than that of the supremacy of the Father; so that though Christ might be called God in a lower sense of the word, the Father was God in a sense so much higher than that, that strictly speaking it was still true, that there was but one God, and the Father only was that God. But by the time of Hilary the philosophizing christians, finding perhaps that this account of the unity of God did not give entire satisfaction, were willing to represent the Son not only as deriving his being and his divinity from the Father, but as still inseparably united to him, and never properly detached from him; and therefore the former comparison of one torch lighted by another would no longer answer the purpose. But this could not be objected to the comparison of the root and the branch, the fountain and the stream, or the sun and the beam of light, according to the philosophy of those times. For in all these cases things were produced from the substance of their respective origins, and yet were not separated from them.

These explanations suited very well with the doctrine of the Trinity as held by the council of Nice; when it was not pretended, as it is now, that each person in the Trinity is equally eternal and uncaused. But they certainly did

not sufficiently provide for the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit; which, however, especially with respect to the two former, they asserted. With respect to the latter, it is not easy to collect their opinions; for, in general, they expressed themselves as if the Spirit was only a divine power.

In order to satisfy the advocates of the proper unity of God, those who then maintained the divinity of Christ, make, upon all occasions, the most solemn protestations against the introduction of two Gods, for the deification of the Spirit was then not much objected to by them. But they thought that they guarded sufficiently against the worship of two Gods, by strongly asserting the inferiority and subordination of the Son to the Father; some of them alledging one circumstance of this inferiority, and others another.

Tertullian cautions us not to destroy the monarchy when we admit a Trinity, since it is to be restored from the Son to the Father. Novatus lays the stress on Christ's being begotten, and the Father not begotten. "If," says he, "the Son had not been begotten, he and the Father, being upon a level, they would both be unbegotten, and therefore there would be two Gods," &c. Again, he says, "when it is said that Moses was appointed a God to Pharaoh, shall it be denied to Christ, who is a God not to Pharaoh, but to the whole universe?" But this kind of divinity would not satisfy the moderns.

Eusebius's apology for this qualified divinity of Christ (for the manner in which he writes is that of an *apology*, and shows that this new doctrine was very offensive to many in his time) turns upon the same hinge with the former of these illustrations of Novatus. "If," says he, "this makes them apprehensive lest we should seem to introduce two Gods, let them know that, though we indeed acknowledge the Son to be God, yet there is absolutely but one God, even he who alone is without original, and unbegotten, who has his divinity properly of himself, and is the cause even to the Son himself both of his being, and of his being such as he is; by whom the Son himself confesses that he lives, declaring expressly *I live by the Father*, and whom he declares to be greater than himself, and to be even his God." This, indeed is supposed to be written by an Arian, but it is the language of all the Trin-

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itarians of his time ; for then it had not occurred to any person to say that the *one* God was the Trinity, or the Father, Son, and Spirit, in conjunction, but always the Father only. The distinction between *person* and *being*, which is the salvo at present, was not then known. Some persons in opposing Sabellius, having made three *Hypostases*, which we now render *persons*, separate from each other, Dionysius, bishop of Rome, quoted with approbation by Athanasius himself, said that it was making three Gods.

I have observed before, and may have occasion to repeat the observation hereafter, that in many cases, the phraseology remains when the ideas which originally suggested it have disappeared ; but that the phraseology is an argument for the pre-existence of the corresponding ideas. Thus it had been the constant language of the church, from the time of the apostles, and is found upon all occasions in their writings, that *Christ suffered* ; meaning, no doubt, in his *whole person*, in every thing which really entered into his constitution. This, however, was not easily reconcilable with the opinion of any portion of the divinity being a proper part of Christ ; and therefore the Docetæ, who first asserted the divine origin of the Son of God, made no scruple to deny, in express words, that Christ suffered. For they said that *Jesus* was one thing, and the *Christ*, or the heavenly inhabitant of Jesus another ; and that when Jesus was going to be crucified, Christ left him.

Irenæus, writing against this heresy, quotes the uniform language of the scriptures as a sufficient refutation of it ; maintaining that *Christ himself*, in his whole nature suffered. "It was no *impassible Christ*," he says, "but Jesus *Christ himself* who suffered for us." It is evident, however, that this writer, who was one of the first that adopted the idea of the divinity of Christ (but on a principle different from that of the Docetæ, viz: the personification of the *Logos* of the Father) could not himself strictly maintain the passibility of his whole nature ; for then he must have held that something which was a proper part of the deity himself was capable of suffering. He therefore, but in a very awkward and ineffectual manner, endeavors to make a case different from that of the Docetæ, by supposing a *mixture* of the two natures in Christ.

"For this reason," he says, "the word of God became *man*, and the Son of God became the Son of man, being

“mixed with the word of God, that receiving the adoption, he might become the son of God. For we could not receive immortality, unless we were united to immortality,” &c. Origen, also, in his third book against Celsus, speaks of the mixture of the humanity with the divinity of Christ. He even speaks of the mortal quality of the very body of Christ as changed into a divine quality.

This confusion of ideas, and inconsistency, appears to have been soon perceived. For we presently find that all those who are called *orthodox* ran into the very error of the *Docetæ*; maintaining, that it only was the *human nature* of Christ that suffered, while another part of his nature, which was no less essential to his being *Christ*, was incapable of suffering; and to this day, all who maintain the proper divinity of Christ, are in the same dilemma. They must either flatly contradict the scriptures, and say, with the *Docetæ*, that Christ did not suffer, or that the divine nature itself may feel pain. This being deemed manifest impiety, they generally adopt the former opinion, viz, that the human nature of Christ only suffered, and content themselves with asserting some inexplicable mixture of the two natures; notwithstanding the idea of one part of the *same person* (and of the intellectual part, too) not feeling pain, while the other did, is evidently inconsistent with any idea of proper *union*, or *mixture*.

The very next writer we meet with after Irenæus, viz: Tertullian, asserts, contrary to him, that it was not Christ, but only the human nature of Christ that suffered. This voice, says he, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,*” “was from the *flesh*, and *soul*, that is, the *man*, and “not the *word*, or *spirit*; that is, it was not of the *God*, “who is impassible, and who left the Son while he gave up his man to death.” What could any of the *Docetæ* have said more?

Arnobius expresses himself to the same purpose. Speaking of the death of Christ, with which the christians were continually reproached. “That death,” says he, “which “you speak of, was the death of *the man* that he had put “on, not of himself, of the burthen, not of the bearer.”

Hilary, who wrote after the council of Nice, went even farther than this, and maintained at large, that the body of Christ was at all times incapable of feeling pain, that it had no need of refreshment by meat and drink; and that he eat

and drank only to shew that he had a body. "Could that hand," says he, which gave an ear to the man that Peter "smote, feel the nail that was driven through it? and could "that flesh feel a wound, which removed the pain of a wound "from another?"

"Later writers, indeed, did not follow Hilary in this extravagance, but Epiphanius says, that Christ, in his death upon the cross, suffered nothing in his divinity. This, too, is the language of those who are called orthodox at this day. But how this is consistent with their doctrine of *atonement*, which supposes an infinite satisfaction to have been made to the justice of God by the death of Christ, does not easily appear.

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## SECTION V.

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE UNITARIANS BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

BEFORE I proceed to the Arian controversy, I must take notice of those who distinguished themselves by maintaining the proper humanity of Christ in this early period. That the christian church in general held this doctrine till the time of Victor, was the constant assertion of those who professed it about this time, and I think I have shewn that this was true.

One of the first who distinguished himself by asserting the simple humanity of Christ, was Theodotus of Byzantium, who, though a tanner, is acknowledged to have been a man of ability. and even of learning. He is said to have been well received at Rome, and at first even by Victor, the bishop of that city, who afterwards excommunicated him.

About the same time, appeared Artemon, from whom those who maintained this opinion were by some called *Artemonites*; but it appears from the writings of Tertullian, that they were more generally called *Monarchists*, from their asserting the proper unity of the divine nature, and the supremacy of God the Father with respect to Christ. By

their enemies they were called *Patripassians*, because they were charged with asserting that the Father was so united to the person of Christ, as even to have suffered with him. But Lardner treats this as a calumny. It should seem, however, that some of them went so far (since Tertullian so particularly quotes it as their own language) as to say that the Father felt compassion for his suffering Son. But this language might be used by them in a figurative sense, in which sense various passions are in the scriptures ascribed to God.

Beausobre thinks them to have been entirely free from this imputation, and imagines it to have arisen from their adversaries, designedly or undesignedly, mixing their own ideas with theirs, and especially confounding the two terms *Logos* and *Son of God*. In consequence of this, when the Unitarians asserted that the Father and the *Logos* were one person, they would of course charge them with maintaining that the Father suffered in the Son. Indeed, Tertullian, as Beausobre observes, contradicts himself when he charges the Unitarians with this opinion, because in other parts of his writings, he expressly says that they believed the Father to be *impassible*.

Praxeas, the Montanist, a man of genius and learning, against whom Tertullian writes, was an Unitarian; and so probably were many others of that sect. For their peculiar opinions and practices, as Montanists, had no relation to any particular opinion concerning the nature of Christ.

It is very evident that about this time the Unitarians were very numerous in all parts of the christian world; and as they were not distinguished by having assemblies separate from those of other christians, which Mosheim allows, their opinion certainly could not be deemed *heretical*. It is even acknowledged that many of these Unitarians (though none of their writings are now come down to us) were men of science. They are particularly said to have been addicted to geometry, and are also said to have treated questions in theology in a geometrical method; but no particulars of this kind are now known to us. It is very possible that this circumstance (which is mentioned by their adversaries by way of reproach) might have arisen from their endeavoring to show that if the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (if this last was then considered as a distinct person) were each of them

God, in any proper sense of the word, there must be more Gods than one. Such geometry as this, I doubt not, gave great offence.

In the following century, viz: the third, we find Noetus, Sabellius, and Paul, bishop of Samosata, the most distinguished among the Unitarians. Noetus was of Smyrna, and is said to have been a disciple of Artemon. Sabellius was bishop, or priest, of Cyrene, in Africa, in which country the Unitarian opinion, as taught by Noetus, is said to have been generally adopted. It is, indeed, said by ecclesiastical historians, that many bishops in this country were brought over to this opinion by Sabellius. But it is much more probable that they held the same opinion before. In that age the prevailing bias was to magnify the personal dignity of Christ, and not to lessen it; so that we find few or no clear instances of any who, having once maintained, that Christ was either God, or a superangelic being, and the maker of this world under God, came afterwards to believe that he was merely a man. Both Noetus and Sabellius, were charged by their adversaries with being Patripassians; but the Unitarians of that age asserting, as the Unitarians now do, that all the divinity of the Son was that of the Father residing in him, and acting by him, was sufficient to give a handle for that injurious representation of their opinion.

There was nothing peculiar in the doctrine of Sabellius, though he is generally charged with maintaining that there were three persons in the Trinity, but that these three *persons* or rather *characters* (*prosopa*) were only different names or attributes, of the same person, or being. If this was a fair representation, Sabellius and his followers must have meant to disguise their Unitarian sentiments in terms appropriated to the orthodoxy of their age. But though many persons are said to do this at present, Sabellius himself is not charged with it by any of his opponents. On the contrary, he is generally said to have been a disciple of Noetus. It is therefore probable, as Beausobre conjectures, that this representation arose from his adversaries misapprehending what he said concerning the Father and the Son being *one*, and concerning the *Father being in him*, and *doing the works*, as our Savior expresses himself. At the same time Sabellius might mean nothing more than the

most avowed Unitarians mean by such language at this day.

Paul, bishop of Samosata, a man of genius and learning, but charged with the arrogance and ambition of other bishops of great sees in those times, made himself obnoxious by maintaining the Unitarian principles, and was condemned for them in several councils held at Antioch, as well as on other accounts. His opinions are acknowledged to have spread much, and to have alarmed the orthodox greatly. But when we read of such persons as this bishop making many converts to the doctrine of the humanity of Christ, I cannot help suspecting, for the reason mentioned above, that it is to be understood of the numbers who were before of that opinion, being encouraged by men of their learning, ability, and influence to declare themselves more openly than they had done before; having been overborne by the philosophizing christians of that age, the current of men's opinions having for some time set that way. This Paul, of Samosata, is represented by Epiphanius, as alledging, in defence of his doctrine, the words of Moses, *the Lord thy God is one Lord*; and he is not charged by him, as others were, with maintaining that the Father suffered; and indeed from this time we hear no more of that accusation, though the tenets of the Unitarians most probably continued the same.

To these we might add, as falling within the same century, Beryllus, bishop of Bostra, in Arabia, said to have been a man of learning and modesty, and to have maintained that Christ had no being before he was born of the Virgin Mary, and no divinity besides that of the Father residing in him. But he is said to have been converted to the orthodox faith by Origen. It is to be regretted that we have no farther information concerning this bishop and other christians in Arabia. Many of them, we are told, maintained, contrary to the philosophy of their times, that the soul died with the body, and that all men would be in a state of insensibility from the time of their death to that of the general resurrection.

I shall close this account of the ancient Unitarians with just mentioning Photinus, bishop of Sirmium, though he flourished after the council of Nice; because he is the last of the Unitarians we read of till the revival of the doctrine in the last age. For though it can hardly be supposed that

the opinion of the simple humanity of Christ was wholly extinct, those who maintained it were overborne and silenced by the Trinitarians on the one hand, and the Arians on the other. And, of the two, the latter were full as hostile to them as the former. This Photinus is said to have been a man of great eloquence. He continued in his bishopric notwithstanding his being condemned in three several synods or councils, especially in one held at Milan, A. D. 345, being extremely popular in his see; but at length he was expelled by a council held at Sirmium itself in 351. This last council was called by order of the Emperor Constantius, and consisted chiefly of Arian bishops.

Here I reluctantly bid adieu, to what I apprehend to be the genuine doctrine of the scriptures concerning the nature of Christ, but we shall see it reappear with growing lustre in a later period.\*

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## SECTION VI.

### OF THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY.

THERE were several things relating to the divinity of Christ which had not been determined by the christian Fathers, before the time of Constantine. Thus, though the term *begotten* had been generally used in speaking of the origin of the Son, by way of emanation from the Father, the term *created*, and others of a similar meaning, had been used occasionally, and as far as appears without giving offence; nor indeed could it well have done so, in an age in which all creation was considered as of the same kind; every substance (at least all intelligent substances, or spirits) being supposed to have been derived ultimately from the same divine essence. This language we find used by Lactantius, and Hilary, after it had begun to be disliked, and reprobated, and therefore it was probably used by them through inadvertence.

Lactantius, however, speaking of the origin of the Son,

\* Appendix D.

says, "as when he was created in his first spiritual birth, he was, from God alone, made a holy spirit; so in his second carnal birth, from his mother alone, he became holy flesh." Hilary says, "God the Father is the cause of all, without beginning, and solitary; but the Son was produced by the Father without time, and was created and founded before the ages. He was not before he was born, but he was born without time. Before all time he alone subsists from the Father alone." As it is not easy to give an exact translation of this passage, on account of its extreme obscurity, I shall give it at length in the note.\* This writer seems to have thought as the generality of the Ante-Nicene Fathers did, that there was a time when Christ was not: but we shall find that after the Arian controversy this opinion was condemned.

It was in consequence of the controversy occasioned by Sabellius in Africa that the peculiar opinions of Arius were started. Sabellius having asserted that there was no difference between the divinity of the Father and that of the Son, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, was thought to have advanced, in opposition to him, something derogatory to our Savior, as that his divinity was so far different from that of the Father, that he was not even of the *same substance* with the Father; which, as we have seen, was contrary to the opinion of those who were deemed orthodox in that age. However, he justified himself in such a manner as gave satisfaction.

But not long after this, Alexander, another bishop of Alexandria, being led by the same controversy to discourse concerning Christ, in the presence of Arius, a presbyter of the same church (with whom he seems to have had some previous difference) among other things in favor of the dignity of Christ, advanced that the Father did not precede the Son a single moment, and that he had issued from all eternity out of the substance of the Father himself. This, being in some respects an advance upon the generally received doctrine, provoked Arius to reply. He allowed that Christ existed before all time, and before the ages, as the

\* Deus Pater est causa omnium, omnino sine initio, solitarius; filius autem sine tempore editus est a patre, et ante secula creatus et fundatus. Non erat antequam nasceretur, sed sine tempore ante omnia natus, solus a solo patre subsistit.



only begotten Son of God, but he said he had no being before he was begotten. He also asserted, in the course of the debate, that Christ was neither of the substance of the Father, nor formed out of pre-existing matter, but, like other things, was created out of nothing. It seems also to have been the opinion of Arius and his followers, but was not perhaps advanced at that time, that this pre-existent spirit was the only intelligent principle belonging to Christ, being in him what the *soul* was supposed to be in other men.

The prejudices of the christians of that age against the doctrine of the proper divinity of Christ must have been very general, and very strong, to have made this doctrine of Arius so popular as we find it presently was. It was a doctrine that does not appear to have been publicly maintained before. But possibly, the difficulty of conceiving how a mere *attribute* of the divine nature could become a *real person*, which had been the orthodox opinion, might have gradually led men to think that Christ had been produced by way of simple *emanation* from God, like other intelligences, or spirits. And when the scripture doctrine of the creation of all things out of nothing began to take place of the doctrine of the philosophers, who asserted the impossibility of any such creation, the opinion of Arius that Christ was made out of nothing would naturally succeed to that of his emanation from the Father; so that it is possible that the minds of the more learned christians might have been fully prepared to receive that doctrine before it was openly published by him.

Indeed, the appeal of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia, and other learned and eminent bishops of that age, proves that he did not imagine that he had advanced an opinion that was altogether peculiar to himself; and their ready reception of his doctrine, and the countenance which they gave him, who was only a presbyter, and had nothing extraordinary to recommend him, is a stronger proof of the same thing. The Arian doctrine, however, was a kind of medium between that of the *simple humanity* of Christ, which was far from being entirely extinguished, though it was less and less relished, and that of his *proper divinity*, which made him to be of the same substance with the Father, and a kind of rival of his dignity, at which it is no wonder that the minds of many revolted. This circum-

stance, therefore, of the Arian doctrine being the medium between two great extremes was alone sufficient to recommend it to many.

It is acknowledged, that Arius, in the course of the controversy, had many abettors in Egypt, where the difference first arose; and among them were many persons distinguished by their genius and learning, as well as by their rank and station in the world. Notwithstanding those advantages on the side of Arius, Alexander prevailed so far, that, in two councils, which he summoned on the occasion, Arius was deprived of his office, and excommunicated. Upon this he retired into Palestine, where he was countenanced by a great number of bishops, but more especially by Eusebius bishop of Nicomedia, one of the most distinguished of any of that age, both for his learning and moderation.

The Emperor Constantine, having endeavored in vain to compose these differences in the religion which he had lately professed, and especially to reconcile Arius and Alexander, at length called a general council of bishops at Nice, the first which had obtained that appellation, and in this council, after much indecent wrangling, and violent debate, Arius was condemned, and banished to Illyricum, a part of the Roman Empire very remote from Alexandria, where the controversy originated. But notwithstanding this condemnation, so far were the christians of that age from having any opinion of the infallibility of councils, that the doctrine of Arius triumphed both over the decrees of this celebrated assembly, and the authority of the Emperor, who was afterwards induced to think better of Arius. He, therefore, recalled him from banishment, and ordered Alexander his bishop to admit him to communion. But Arius died before the order could be executed. Constantius the successor of Constantine, and also some others of the Emperors, favored the Arians, and in those reigns their doctrine was by far the most generally received throughout the Roman Empire. The bishops of that profession held many councils, and they are acknowledged to have been very full. But at length Arianism was in a great measure banished from the Roman Empire by the persecutions of the Emperor Theodosius, who interested himself greatly in favor of the Trinitarian doctrine. The Arians took refuge in great numbers among the Burgundians, Goths, Vandals,

and other unconquered barbarous nations, whom they were a great means of bringing over to the christian faith, and all of them, without exception, professed the Arian doctrine, till it was overpowered by the influence and authority of the bishops of Rome. The Vandals were long the support of Arianism in Africa, but it never recovered its credit after their extirpation from that province by the arms of the Emperor Justinian.

So far was the council of Nice from giving general satisfaction, that Hilary, presently afterwards, complains of the Arians as being in all the provinces of the Roman Empire; and in the next reign Arianism was very near becoming the universal doctrine of the christian church, and of course would have been deemed orthodox.

The debates occasioned by this famous council made a great revolution both in the language, and in the opinions of those who were deemed orthodox. It is the natural effect of controversy to push men as far as possible from that extreme which they wish to avoid, so as often to drive them into the opposite extreme. This was remarkably the case on this occasion; and no controversy ever interested so many persons, and those so deeply, as this did, and indeed continues to do to this day.

In order to keep quite clear of Arianism, which made Christ to be a *mere creature*, those who approved of the decrees of the council began to express themselves as Moseheim acknowledges, in such a manner, as that they really substituted three Gods instead of one. And many of them seemed to imagine that they sufficiently maintained the unity of the Godhead, by asserting that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were each of them, of the same divine nature, as three or more men have each of them the same human nature.

This was certainly giving up the unity of the divine nature; and yet being obliged by the whole tenor of revelation to maintain the doctrine of only *one God*, in conjunction with this new doctrine of three separate Gods, such a manifest inconsistency was introduced, as nothing could cover but the pretence that this doctrine of the Trinity was inexplicable by human reason. And then the word *mystery*, which had before been applied to the doctrine of the Trinity, in common with other things which were simply deemed *sacred*, began to be used in a new sense, and to

signify not as before, a thing that was *secret*, and required to be explained; but something absolutely *incapable of being explained*, something that must be believed, though it could not be understood. But the whole doctrine, as it was afterwards generally professed, and as it now stands in every established christian church, was not finally settled before the composition of what is called the *Athanasian Creed*, and its reception into the offices of public worship.

When this creed was made, and by whom, is uncertain. It appeared about the end of the fifth century, and is by some ascribed to Vigilius Tapsensis. Though this creed contains a number of as direct contradictions as any person, the most skilled in logic, can draw up, it still keeps its ground, guarded from all human inspection, like the doctrine of transubstantiation, by this new but thin veil of *mystery*. But before I proceed to give a more particular account of this farther change in the doctrine, I must note by what steps the *Holy Spirit* came to be reckoned a distinct person in this Trinity.

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## SECTION VII.

### OF THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THERE is very little in the scriptures that could give any idea of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, besides the figurative language in which our Lord speaks of the *advocate*, or *comforter*, as we render it (*parakletos*) that was to succeed him with the apostles after his ascension. But our Lord's language is, upon many occasions, highly figurative, and it is the less extraordinary that the figure called *personification* should be made use of by him here, as the peculiar presence of the spirit of God, which was to be evinced by the power of working miracles, was to succeed in the place of a real person, viz: himself, and to be to his apostles what he himself had been, viz: their advocate, comforter, and guide.

That the apostles did not understand our Lord as speaking of a real person, at least afterwards, when they reflect-

ed upon his meaning, and saw the fulfilment of his promise, is evident from their never adopting the same language, but speaking of the Holy Spirit as of a *divine power* only. The apostle Paul expressly speaks of the spirit of God as bearing the same relation to God, that the spirit of a man bears to man, 1 Cor. ii. 11. *What man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God.*

Besides, the writers of the New Testament always speak of the Holy Spirit as the same spirit by which the ancient prophets were inspired, which was certainly never understood by them to be any other than the Divine Being himself, enabling them, by his supernatural communications, to foretell future events.

Also, the figurative language in which the Holy Spirit and his operations, are sometimes described by them is inconsistent with the idea of his being a separate person; as being *baptized* with the spirit, being *filled* with the spirit; *quenching* the spirit, &c. in all which the idea is evidently that of a *power*, and not that of a *person*.

For these reasons I think it possible, that we should never have heard of the opinion of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, if it had not been for the form of baptism supposed, but without reason, to be given in the gospel of Matthew, where the apostles are directed to baptize *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*. For though the meaning of these words, as explained by pretty early writers in the primitive church, is nothing more than "baptizing into that religion which was given by the Father, "by means of the Son, and confirmed by miraculous power," and this particular form of words does not appear to have been used in the age of the apostles, who seem to have baptized *in the name of Jesus* only; yet since this form did come into universal use, after forms began to be thought of importance, and in it the Father and Son were known to be real persons, it was not unnatural to suppose that the *Spirit*, being mentioned along with them, was a real person also.

It was a long time, however, before this came to be a fixed opinion, and especially an article of faith, the christian writers before and after the council of Nice generally speaking of the Holy Spirit in a manner that may be interpreted either of a *person* or of a *power*. But it is evident, that

when they seem to speak of the Holy Spirit as of a person, they suppose that person to be much inferior to God, and even to Christ. Some of them might possibly suppose that the Holy Spirit was an emanation from the divine essence, and similar to the *Logos* itself; but others of them speak of the Holy Spirit as a *creature* made by Christ, by whom they supposed all other creatures to have been made.

With respect to the apostolical Fathers, their language on this subject is so much that of the scriptures, that we are not able to collect from it any peculiar or precise ideas. It is probable, therefore, that they considered the Holy Spirit as a power and not a person.

Justin Martyr, who was one of the first who supposed the *Logos* to be Christ, never says, in express words, that the Spirit is God, in any sense; and when he mentions worship as due to the Spirit, it is in the same sentence in which he speaks of it as due to angels. "Him," says he, meaning God, "and the Son that came from him, and the host of other good angels, who accompany and resemble him, together with the prophetic Spirit, we adore and venerate; in word and truth honoring them." In another place, he says, "we place the Son in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third." Again, he places "the *Logos* in the second place, and the Spirit which moved on the water in the third." It is not improbable but that this writer might consider the Holy Spirit as a person, but as much inferior to the Son, as he made the Son inferior to the Father.

Tertullian in one place evidently confounds the *Holy Spirit* with the *Logos*, and therefore it is plain that he had no idea of a proper third person in the Trinity. Speaking of the Spirit of God which overshadowed the virgin Mary, he said, "It is that Spirit which we call the *word*. For the spirit is the substance of the word, and the word the operation of the spirit, and those two are one." But in another place he says, "the spirit is a third after God, and the Son; as the fruit, proceeding from the branch, is the third from the root."

Origen speaks of it as a doubt whether the Holy Spirit be not a creature of the Son, since all things are said to have been made by him.

Novatus says, "that Christ is greater than the paraclete;

“for the paraclete would not receive from Christ, unless he was less than Christ.”

The author of the *Recognitions*, a spurious but an ancient work, and never charged with heresy, says, “that the Holy Spirit, the paraclete, is neither God, nor the Son, but was made by him that was made, or begotten (*factus per factum*) viz: by the Son, the Father only being not begotten, or made.”

One reason why those Fathers who had modified the theological tenets by the principles of the heathen philosophy did not readily fall into the notion of the personality or at least the divinity, of the Holy Spirit, might be that there was nothing like it in the philosophy of Plato, which had assisted them so much in the deification of Christ.

A *third principle* was indeed sometimes mentioned by the Platonists, but this was either the soul of the world, or the material creation itself; for there are different representations of the Platonic doctrine on this subject.

At length, however, the constant usage of the form of baptism mentioned by Matthew, together with the literal interpretation of our Savior's description of the Holy Spirit, probably, gave most of the primitive christians an idea of its being a *person*; and the rest of the language of scripture would naturally enough lead them to conclude that it must be a divine person. But it was a long time before these things coalesced into a regular system.

The Fathers of the council of Nice said nothing about the divinity, or the personality of the Holy Spirit; nor was it customary in the time of Basil to call the Holy Spirit God. Hilary interprets baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, by the equivalent expressions of the *author, the only begotten, and the gift*.

That little is said concerning the separate divinity of the Spirit of God in the scriptures is evident to every body; but the reason that Epiphanius gives for it will not be easily imagined. In order to account for the apostles saying so little concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and omitting the mention of him after that of the Father and the Son; (as when Paul says, *there is one God, and Father of all, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, of whom are all things*) he says that “the apostles writing by the inspiration of the Spirit, he did not choose to introduce

"such commendation of himself, lest it should give us an example of commending ourselves."

What is most particularly remarkable is, that the Fathers of the council of Sardica, held in 347, a council called by the authority of the emperors Constance and Constantius, a hundred and sixty bishops being present, of whom Athanasius himself was one, and two hundred more approving of the decrees after they had been sent to them (a council in which it was decreed that the Father, Son, and Spirit, was *one hypostasis*, which they say the heretics call *ousia*, and that the Father never was without the Son, nor the Son without the Father) did not distinguish between the *Holy Spirit* and the *Logos*, any more than Tertullian did in the passage quoted above. They say, "We believe in the paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord himself promised and sent. He did not suffer, but the man which he put on, and which Christ took from the virgin Mary, which could suffer: for man is liable to death, but God is immortal."

Basil says that "the spirit is superior to a created being, but the title *unbegotten* (*agenneetos*) is what no man can be so absurd as to presume to give to any other than the supreme God." Then, speaking of his not being begotten, like the Son, but proceeding from the Father, he says, "neither let any man think that our refusing to call the Spirit a creature is denying his personality (*hypostasis*)."

The subject might have longer remained in this unsettled state, if Macedonius, an eminent Semiarian, who had been expelled from the church of Constantinople, had not expressly denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit; maintaining, as some say, that it was only the spirit or power of God; or according to others, that he was a creature like the angels, but superior to them. This opinion, being much talked of, had many abettors, especially in Egypt. But Athanasius, who was then concealed in the deserts of that country, hearing of it, wrote against it, and he is said to have been the first who applied the word *consubstantial* to the Spirit, it having before been applied to the Son only.

It was some time, however, before any public notice was taken of this opinion of Macedonius; and in a council held at Lampsacum in 365, a council demanded by the catholic bishops, though the greater number of those who actually



met were Arians, the opinion of Macedonius, as Socrates the historian observes, appeared to have gained more ground than ever, and would probably have been the received opinion, had it not been for the interference of an orthodox emperor in the business.

At length, in what is called the second general council, which was held at Constantinople in 381, under Theodosius the great, the opinion of Macedonius was condemned, though thirty-six of the bishops present were in favor of it. In the creed drawn up by this council, it is said, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeded from the Father, and who ought to be adored and glorified with the Father and the Son, and who spake by the prophets." This clause is now generally annexed to the Nicene creed, though no such thing had been determined at the time of that council.

Thus, at length, the great outline of the present doctrine of the Trinity was completed, though many points of less consequence still remained to be adjusted, as we shall see in the prosecution of this subject; and the doctrine of the *consubstantiability* of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, though implied, is not directly expressed in the decrees of this council.

As the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was very unpopular at first, so that of the divinity of the Holy Spirit appears to have been so too, as we may clearly infer from the writings of Basil. He speaks of all people being interested in the debate on the subject, and even of his own disciples, as presuming to act the part of judges in the case; asking questions not to learn, but to puzzle and confound their teachers. The argument by which he represents himself and his orthodox brethren as most frequently urged was the following: Every thing must necessarily be either *unbegotten*, *begotten*, or *created*. If the Holy Spirit be unbegotten, he must be the same with the Father, and if he be begotten, he must be the Son: If, therefore, he be a *person* distinct from both, he must be a creature. For the good Father's answer to this objection I must refer my reader to his twenty-seventh homily which is against the Sabellians.

I shall close this article with a short account of the word *Trinity*, and of the advantage which this doctrine gave the heathens. The first appearance of the word *Trinity* is in

the writings of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, but it is not clear that by it he meant a Trinity consisting of the same persons that it was afterwards made to consist of, and certainly not a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. He says, that the three days which preceded the creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day, in the first chapter of Genesis, represent the sacred mystery of the Trinity, viz: "God, his word, and his wisdom." He adds, "the fourth day is the type of man, who needs light, that there may be God, the *Logos, wisdom, and man.*" This passage is certainly obscure enough, and it could hardly have been imagined from it that by *wisdom* he meant the *Holy Spirit*, the third person in the modern Trinity, had not the same term been used by other writers, and especially by Tatian, who was cotemporary with Theophilus. For he also makes a Trinity of *God, his word, and his wisdom.* About the same time Irenæus mentions the same three members, though he has not the word Trinity. "There is always," says he, "with God his word, and wisdom, his Son, and Spirit, by whom, and in whom, he made every thing freely." After this we find the word *Trinity* in common use, but long before it was imagined that the three persons who constituted it were consubstantial, coeternal, and equal in power and glory.

Both the *term* and the *doctrine* of the Trinity occur in a piece entitled *Expositio Fidei*, ascribed to Justin Martyr; but this is evidently spurious, and of a date much later than the time of Justin. It is remarkable, too, that Clemens Alexandrinus, who was in the very centre of the Platonism of those days, and who did not write till after Theophilus, never uses the term but once, and then it is to denote the bond of christian graces, *faith, hope, and charity.*

We cannot wonder that this introduction of new objects of worship by christians, should not pass unnoticed by the heathens; and as it was chiefly a wish to recommend their religion to others, that gave them their original bias towards exalting the person of Christ, they were very properly punished by the advantage which the heathens took of this very circumstance.

The *incarnation of the eternal word*, appears to have been a subject of ridicule to Celsus, who compares it to the fable of the transformations of Jupiter, in the history of Danaë, &c. He also justifies the polytheism of the heathens

by the example of the christians in this respect. "If christians," says he, "worshipped only one God, they might have some pretence for despising all others; whereas they render these immense honors to a mere upstart." To this Origen answers, by alledging the text, *I and my Father are one*, explaining it by *all the disciples being of one heart and one mind*. But so might the heathen gods have been one.

The emperor Julian did not overlook this obvious topic of reproach to christians. He particularly upbraided them with calling Mary the *mother of God*, and charges them with contradicting Moses, who taught that there is but one God.

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## SECTION VIII.

THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY FROM THE COUNCILS OF NICE AND CONSTANTINOPLE, TILL AFTER THE EUTYCHIAN CONTROVERSY.

BEFORE I relate what was peculiar to those who obtained the name of *orthodox* in this controversy, I shall just mention the divisions of the Arians, which contributed much to the prejudice of their cause, as they often proceeded to great violence against each other.

The original and proper Arians held simply, that the Son was *created out of nothing*, sometime before the creation of the world, which they said was made by him. But they did not immediately attend to the proper consequences of their doctrine, but generally supposed that the nature of Christ was something *similar* to that of God. Afterwards, however, Aetius, and after him Eunomius, maintained that Christ being a *creature*, must have a nature wholly *different* from that of God, and therefore *unlike* it. From thia the proper Arians were termed Anomœans, Aetians, and Eunomians. The emperor Constantius was of the original Arians, but Valens was of the latter class.

In 391, we find mention of another division among the Arians, viz: whether the Father could be properly so call-

ed from all eternity, before he had a Son. On this frivolous question, of mere words, the Arians are said to have divided with great bitterness, so as to have formed separate assemblies. But it must be considered that the history of these divisions is only given by their enemies. Before I give any account of more modern Arianism, I shall proceed with the state of Trinitarianism after the council of Nice.

No sooner was the general outline of the doctrine of *three persons in one God* settled by the council of Nice, but the orthodox began to divide upon questions of great nicety; and human passions and interests always mixing with these debates, the different parties anathematized each other with great violence.

The first dispute was about the use of the word *hypostasis*, which we now render *person*, but which had generally been considered as very nearly synonymous with *essence* (*ousia*). In general the Greeks understood it in a different sense; and having in view the Sabellians, who were said to assert the identity of the Father, Son, and Spirit, said that there were *three hypostases* in the divine nature. On the other hand, the Latins, willing to oppose the Arians, who made the Son to be of a different nature from the Father, usually said that there was but one *hypostasis* in the Trinity; and we have seen that the Fathers of the council of Sardica had decided in the same manner.

This dispute terminated more happily than almost any other in the whole compass of church history. For a council being held on the subject at Alexandria, in 372, the Fathers found that they had been disputing about words, and therefore they exhorted christians not to quarrel upon the subject. Ever after, however, the phraseology of the Greeks prevailed, and the orthodox always say that there are *three hypostases*, or persons in the unity of the divine essence.

By this happy device, and that of declaring the doctrine to be *incomprehensible*, the Trinitarians imagine that they sufficiently screen themselves from the charge of *Polytheism*, and *Idolatry*. Whereas if they did but pretend to affix any ideas to their words, they must see that the device can avail them nothing. If by *person*, or any other term which they apply to each of the three members of the Trinity, they mean an *intelligent principle*, having a real consciousness, they must, to all intents and purposes, admit

*three Gods.* This was thought to be unavoidable by the council of Sardica, which therefore asserted *one hypostasis*, in agreement with the original idea of the Son being an emanation from the Father, but not separated from his essence. Whereas now the original idea, on which the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was formed, is entirely abandoned, and in reality another doctrine is received; a doctrine which all the Ante-Nicene Fathers, who had no idea of any distinction between *hypostasis*, and *essence*, would have reprobated, as downright polytheism. The Arians, in a council held at Constantinople in 360, rejected the use of the word *hypostasis*, as applied to the Divine Being.

There seems to have been no reason why Christ should have been supposed to have had any more than one intelligent principle; and yet we have seen that some of the Ante-Nicene Fathers thought there was in Christ a proper *human soul*, besides the *Logos*, which constituted his divinity. But perhaps they might have been reconciled to this opinion by the popular notion of *dæmons* possessing men, who yet had souls of their own. Or by *Anima*, which is the word that Tertullian uses, they might mean the *sensitive principle* in man, as distinct from the *Animus* or *rational principle*, a distinction which we find made by Cicero, and others.

However, after the council of Nice, and about the year 370, Apollinaris the younger, bishop of Laodicea, who had distinguished himself by taking an active part against the Arians, being attached to the principles of the Platonic philosophy (according to which there are *three principles* in man, viz. his *body*, together with the *rational* and *sensitive soul*, but not more than these three) thought that the *body*, the *sensitive principle*, and the *Logos* were sufficient to constitute Christ; and therefore he asserted that Christ had no proper human soul. In consequence of this he was charged with maintaining that the Deity suffered on the cross; but whether he himself avowed this opinion does not appear. This doctrine, which was so far analagous to that of the Arians, that it supposed one intelligent principle in Christ, was well received by great numbers of christians in all the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire; but it was condemned in a synod at Rome, and being likewise borne down by imperial authority, at length it became extinct.

Whiston, who was certainly well read in christian antiquity, asserts that Athanasius seems never to have heard of the opinion of Christ having any other soul than his divinity, and that the idea of a human and rational soul in Christ was one of the last branches of this heresy. This writer also asserts, that there does not appear in Athanasius's treatise on the incarnation the least sign of the *hypostatical union*, or communication of properties, which he says the orthodox have been since forced to devise in support of their notions.

This business, however, was finally settled on the occasion of what is called the heresy of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, which though small in its origin, had great consequences, the effects of it remaining to this day.

This being an age in which great compliments were paid to the virgin Mary, among other appellations it became customary to call her the *mother of God*, and this was a favorite term with the followers of Apollinaris. This phraseology Nestorius, who had distinguished himself by his opposition to the Apollinarians, declared to be improper, and said it was sufficient to call her the *mother of Christ*. To justify this, he was led to assert that there are *two distinct natures in Christ*, the divine and the human, and that Mary was the mother of the latter only.

This doctrine had many followers, and even the monks of Egypt were induced in consequence of it, to discontinue their custom of calling Mary the mother of God. Cyril, then bishop of Alexandria, a man of a haughty and imperious temper, was highly offended at this; and having engaged in his interest Celestine bishop of Rome, he assembled a council at Alexandria, in 430, and in this council the opinion of Nestorius was condemned, and a severe anathema was pronounced against him.

Nestorius, not being moved by this, excommunicated Cyril in his turn. But at length Theodosius the younger called a general council at Ephesus, in 431, in which Cyril, though a party concerned, presided; and without hearing Nestorius, and during the absence of many bishops who had a right to sit in that council, he was condemned, and sent into banishment, where he ended his days.

In this factious manner was the great doctrine of the *hypostatical union* of the two natures in Christ (which has ever since been the doctrine of what is called the Catholic

church) established. The opinion of Nestorius, however, was zealously maintained by Barsumas bishop of Nisibis; and from this place it was spread over the East, where it continues to be the prevailing doctrine to this day. The opinion of Nestorius was also received in the famous school of Edessa, which contributed greatly to the same event.

This controversy was in fact, of considerable consequence, there being some analogy between the doctrine of Nestorius and that of the ancient Unitarians, or modern Socinians; as they both maintained that Christ was a mere man. But whereas the Socinians say that the divinity of the Father resided in Christ, the Nestorians say that it was the *Logos*, or the second person in the Trinity, that resided in him.

But this union between the *Son of God* and the *son of man*, they said was not an union of *nature*, or of *person*, but only of *will and affection*; and that Christ was carefully to be distinguished from God, who dwelt in him, as in a temple. In this manner did the Nestorians, who had had several disputes among themselves, settle the matter, in several councils held at Nisibis.

The opposition that was made to the heresy of Nestorius produced another, formed by Eutyches, abbot of a convent of monks at Constantinople, who had had a great hand in the condemnation of Nestorius. Eutyches was so far from being of the opinion of Nestorius, that he asserted that there was but *one nature* in Christ, and that was the *divine* or the *incarnate word*. Hence he was thought to deny the human nature of Christ; but he was generally supposed to mean that the human nature was *absorbed* in the divine, as a drop of honey would be absorbed, and no more distinguished if it should fall into the sea. There were other explanations and distinctions occasioned by this doctrine, which I think it not worth while to recite.

It may be proper, however, to observe, that the minds of many persons, especially in Egypt, were prepared for this opinion by another which had obtained there, and which I have observed to have been maintained by Hilary, viz. that the body of Christ was incorruptible, and not subject to any natural infirmity. Theodosius the Great fell into this opinion in his old age. According to this doctrine, the human nature of Christ, being of so exalted a kind, might easily be supposed to have become so in consequence of its

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being absorbed, as it were, in the divine; so as to partake of its properties. It was, therefore, no wonder that they should express themselves as if they considered Christ as having, in fact, but one nature.

Eutyches was condemned by a council held at Constantinople, probably in 448, and in consequence of it was excommunicated and deposed. But he was acquitted by another council held at Ephesus, in 449. However, in a general council, called *the fourth*, held at Chalcedon, in 451, he was condemned finally, and from that time it has been the doctrine of what is called the *Catholic church*, that "in Christ there are *two distinct natures*, united in one *person*, but without any change, mixture, or confusion."

The doctrine of Eutyches continued to be professed by many notwithstanding the decrees of the council. It was almost universally received in the patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria, and it is found in the East to this day. In 535, the Eutychians divided, some of them maintaining that there were some things which Christ did not know, while others asserted that he knew every thing, even the time of the day of judgment.

By the decision of the council of Chalcedon, the modern doctrine of the *Trinity* was nearly completed, the union of the *two natures* in Christ corresponding to that of the *three persons* in the deity: and it was thought to answer many objections to the divinity of Christ from the language of the scriptures, in a better manner than the Ante-Nicene Fathers had been able to do. These frankly acknowledged a real superiority in the Father with respect to the whole nature of Christ; but the later Trinitarians, by means of this convenient distinction of *two natures in one person*, could suppose Christ to be fully equal to the Father as *God*, at the same time that he was inferior to him as *man*; to know the day of judgment as God, no less than the Father himself, though, at the same time, he was entirely ignorant of it considered as man.

It might seem, however, to be some objection to this scheme, that, according to it, the evangelists must have intended to speak of one *part* of Christ only, and to affirm concerning that, what was by no means true of his whole person; at the same time that their language cannot be interpreted but so as to include his whole person. For certainly it is not natural to suppose that by the word *Christ* they meant any



thing less than his whole person. Much less can we suppose that our Savior speaking concerning *himself* could mean only a *part of himself*. By means of this distinction, modern Trinitarians are able to say that the human nature of Christ only suffered, and yet its union with the divine nature (though it was so imperfect an union as to communicate no sensation to it) was sufficient to give it the same merit and efficacy as if it had been divine. To such wretched expedients, which do not deserve a serious consideration, are the advocates for this christian polytheism reduced.\*

Thus, to bring the whole into a short compass, the first general council gave the Son the same nature with the Father, the second admitted the Holy Spirit into the Trinity, the third assigned to Christ a human soul in conjunction with the eternal *Logos*, the fourth settled the hypostatical union of the divine and human nature of Christ, and the fifth affirmed, that in consequence of this union, the two natures constituted only one person. It requires a pretty good memory to retain these distinctions, it being a business of *words* only, *ideas* not being concerned in it.

Before I proceed any farther, it may not be amiss to give a brief account of some other particulars relating to the Eutychian doctrine, though they were hardly heard of in this part of the world; and the opinions that were then entertained in the East are not worth reciting, except to show into what absurdities men may fall, when they get out of the road of plain truth and common sense.

The decisions of the council of Chalcedon were condemned by those who called themselves *Monophysites*, a sect which sprung from the Eutychians. They maintained that the divinity and humanity of Christ were so united, as to constitute only *one nature*, yet without any change, confusion, or mixture of the two natures, saying that in Christ there is one nature, but that nature is two-fold and compounded.

In the sixth century, the Monophysites acquired new vigor by the labors of a monk whose name was Jacob, surnamed Baradeus, or Zanzales, and who died bishop of Edessa. From him the sect of Monophysites now go by the name of Jacobites in the East. The Monophysites were afterwards divided into a variety of other sects; and the

\* Appendix E.

Armenians, who are of that denomination, are governed by a bishop of their own, and are distinguished by various rites and opinions from the other Monophysites.

It was long debated among the Monophysites whether the body of Christ was created or uncreated; and whether it was corruptible or not; and some of them maintained that though it was corruptible, it was never actually corrupted, but was preserved from corruption by the energy of the divine nature. The Monophysites had also many controversies concerning the sufferings of Christ; and among them Xenias of Hierapolis, maintained that Christ suffered pain not in his nature, but by a submissive act of his will. Some of them also affirmed, that all things were known to the divine nature of Christ, but not to his human nature.

From the controversies among the Monophysites, there arose a sect called Tritheists, the chief of whom was John Ascunage, a Syrian philosopher, who imagined that in the deity there are three natures or substances, joined together by one common essence. The great defender of this opinion was John Philoponus, an Alexandrian philosopher. A third sect was that of the Damianists, so called from Damian, bishop of Alexandria. They distinguished the *divine essence* from the *three persons*, and denied that each person was God, when considered in itself, and abstractedly from the other two. But they said there was a *common divinity*, by the joint participation of which each person was God.

Had these subtle distinctions occurred while the Roman empire was united under one head, councils would probably have been called to decide concerning them; solemn decrees, with the usual tremendous anathemas annexed to them, would have been made, and the Athanasian creed would not then, perhaps, have been the most perplexed and absurd thing imposed upon the consciences of christians.

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## SECTION IX.

THE STATE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IN THE  
CHURCH.

FROM the time of the complete separation of the eastern and western empires, the Greek and Latin churches had but little connection, and their writings being in different languages, were very little known to each other, the Latins being able to read Greek, or the Greeks the Latin. Though, therefore, the members of both churches were addicted to theological discussions, they took a quiet turn, and except upon very particular occasions, did not interfere with each other.

With respect to the doctrine of the *Trinity*, this difference between the eastern and western churches was that as the eastern empire was under one head, the emperor resided at Constantinople, which was the seat of all the Grecian literature, he frequently interfered in the disputes of the ecclesiastics; in consequence of which councils were called, decrees were made, and the articles of faith immediately enforced by imperial authority. Whereas the western empire being broken into many parts, and the studious theologians dispersed in convents all over Europe, their speculations were more free, and though the authority of the pope preserved a union among them, yet the popes of the middle ages, like sovereign princes, seldom interfered with religious disputes, unless they had some apparent influence with respect to their spiritual or temporal power. This was perhaps the reason why no new councils were called, and no new decrees were made respecting the doctrine of the *Trinity*.

Since, however, what had been determined by general councils was received in the West, as well as in the East, the liberty of speculating on this subject was much confined; so that instead of inventing doctrinally new, divines rather confined themselves to new modifications, and new modes of explaining old ones. In this field the human faculties have perhaps appeared to as great advantage as in any other, within the whole compass of speculation. We are only apt to

that such wonderful abilities, and so much time, should have been employed on no better objects. But when, in some future period, all the labors of the mind of man shall be compared, it will, I doubt not, appear, that the studies of the *schoolmen*, to whom I am now alluding, were not without their use.

Frivolous, however, as I think the object of their inquiries was, I do not think that the world could ever boast of greater men, with respect to acuteness of speculation, than Peter Lombard, and Thomas Aquinas, especially the latter. When I only look over the contents of his *Summa*, and see the manner in which a few articles are executed (for no Protestant, I imagine, will ever think it worth his while to read many sections in that work) and consider the time in which he lived, how much he wrote besides, and the age at which he died, viz. forty-seven, I am filled with astonishment. He seems to have exhausted every subject that his own wonderful ingenuity could start, and among the rest the doctrine of the Trinity has by no means been overlooked by him.

But the first who seems to have led the way, though in a remote preceding period, to the refinements of the schoolmen in later ages, and whose authority established the principle articles of orthodoxy, so that his opinions were generally received as the standard of faith, was Augustine, who flourished after the great outline of the doctrine of the Trinity was drawn in the general councils of Nice and Constantinople.

In this writer we find the doctrine of the Trinity treated in a manner considerably different from that of preceding writers. For in his time the doctrine established by the general councils had affected the *language* commonly used in treating the subject; so that words had begun to be used in senses unknown to the ancients. Thus before the council of Nice whenever the word *God* occurred in the scriptures, and the supreme God was meant by it, it had always been understood as referring to the Father only; and in this manner all the ancient Fathers explained every passage in which the word *God*, as distinguished from Christ, occurred; and they had recourse to such expedients as have been mentioned in the early period of this history, to account for the divinity of Christ, without supposing that

he had any title to be comprehended under the general expression.

But in the writings of Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nysen, and Basil, in the East, and Ambrose and Augustine in the West, we often find the words *God* and *Trinity* to be synonymous. They maintained that all the three persons are to be understood, though they are not expressly mentioned, and they allowed no real prerogative whatever to the Father; an idea which would have staggered all the Nicene Fathers. So far was Augustine from supposing that the Father was truly greater than the Son, that he says, "two or three of the persons are not greater than any one of them." This, says he, "the carnal mind does not comprehend, because it can perceive nothing to be true, but with respect to things that are *created*, and cannot perceive the *truth itself*, by which they are created." He condemns those who have said the Father alone is immortal, and invisible, and he blames Hilary, for ascribing eternity to the Father only. He so far, however, adheres to the *language* of his predecessors, as to say, that the Father alone is *God of God* (*ex Deo*.) But by this he could not mean what the Nicene Fathers meant by it.

Augustine is also bolder, and more copious, in his illustrations of the doctrine of the Trinity, by comparisons with other things; though the doctrine being farther removed from human comprehension, it was then become much less capable of being explained in that way. Among other things he finds a resemblance of the Trinity in the *memory*, *understanding*, and *will* of man. But then none of these powers, separately taken, constitute a man, and his other comparisons are, by his own confession, still more lame and inadequate than this.

As my readers will probably wish to see in what manner some of those texts of scriptures, which are usually alledged in support of the doctrine of the Trinity were understood by this writer, I shall recite his interpretation of a few on which they have seen the comments of the earlier Fathers, that they may see, how the doctrine itself had changed in his time. He explains John xiv. 28, *My Father is greater than I*, by saying, that "Christ having emptied himself of his former glory, and being in the form of a servant, was then less, not only than his Father, but even than himself, at the very time in which he

"was speaking; for he did not so take the form of a servant as to lose the form of God." He explains *Christ giving up the kingdom to God even the Father*, by saying that, the whole Trinity is intended in that expression, himself and the Holy Spirit not excluded. His manner of explaining Mark xiii. 32, in which it is said that the *Son knows not the time of the day of judgment*, is still more extraordinary. For he says, that by *not knowing* is to be understood his *not making others to know*. He seems to understand, Phil. ii. 6, of a perfect equality with God. And lastly he says, that by the Father and Son being *one*, we are to understand the *consubstantial unity* of the Son with the Father. Most of these interpretations were then quite new, but now these, or such as these, are in the mouths of all Trinitarians.

After Augustine we find a long period of great darkness in the western church, and in this period his credit was firmly established; so that we find him quoted as an authority, almost equal to that of the councils, and even the scriptures themselves. But the age of great refinement in speculation began about the time of Berenger, and Anselm, two of the greatest scholars of their time; and had not the former of them been unfortunately heterodox in the doctrine of the eucharist, he would have been the most celebrated for his learning and abilities of all his cotemporaries.

Anselm, though he writes with wonderful acuteness, is not systematical. He does not professedly treat of the Trinity, and indeed we find little in him that is particularly remarkable on this subject, besides an obscure intimation, that the doctrine might have been known by natural reason. In proving the eternity of Christ, he says, "*Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God*; if, therefore, God, had ever been without Christ, he must have been without wisdom and without power." And he says, that "Christ by his own power rose from the dead." Lastly, in answer to the question why we may not as well say there are *two persons* in Christ, as *two natures*, he says, "as in God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, are three persons, and but one God; so in Christ, the Godhead is one person, and the manhood another person; and yet these are not two persons but one person." My readers, I hope, will not be disappointed in finding no great light on this subject from this learned archbishop; nor must they form

much higher expectations either from Peter Lombard, or Thomas Aquinas.

Peter Lombard has many new distinctions on the subject of the Trinity, and, as an article of some curiosity, I shall recite a few things from him, as well as from Thomas Aquinas, who wrote in the century following, and who is abundantly more copious, as well as more systematical.

Peter Lombard illustrates Augustine's comparison of the three persons in the Trinity, to the *memory, understanding and will* of man, by observing, that they all comprehend one another. "Thus we can say, I remember that I remember, that I understand, and that I will; I can also say I understand that I understand, that I remember, and that I will; and lastly I can say I will that I will, understand and remember." He decides the question whether the Father begat the Son willingly or unwillingly; by saying, that he begat him *by nature* and not by *will (natura non voluntate)* so that he retained the idea, without adopting the offensive expression *volens*. It is something extraordinary that he owns, that he cannot distinguish between the generation of the Son, and the procession of the Spirit.

After asserting, after Augustine, that no one person in the Trinity is less than the other two, or than all the three; he says, "he that can receive this, let him receive it; he that cannot, let him however believe it; and let him pray that what he believes he may understand." In this, which is certainly not a little curious, this subtle writer seems to have been followed by some moderns; and the last article I shall quote from him is not less curious, though I believe none of the moderns will choose to adopt his language, which, however, is very honest. After asking why, as we say that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God, we may not say there are *three Gods*? "It is," says he, "because the scripture does not say so. But neither does the scripture say that there are three persons in the Trinity. This, however, does not *contradict* the scripture, which says nothing about it; whereas it would be a contradiction to the scripture to say there are *three Gods*, because Moses says, Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord." As to a contradiction with respect to *reason and common sense*, this writer seems to have made

no difficulty of it, not having thought it worth his while to take it into consideration.

I must mention another peculiarity of Peter Lombard, because it was the occasion of some controversy. He made some distinction between the *divine essence* and the *three persons in the Godhead*. But on this he was attacked in a large work by Joachim, abbot of Flora, who denied that there was any *essence*, or any thing that belonged in common to the three persons, by which their *substantial* union was taken away, and nothing but a *numerical* or *moral* union was left. This explication was, therefore, condemned by Innocent the third, in 1215.

Though Thomas Aquinas writes very largely on the subject of the Trinity, he has not much that is peculiar to himself. He defines a *person* to "be an individual substance "of a rational nature," and pretends to demonstrate, *a priori*, that there must be more persons than one in the divine essence, but not more than three. And lastly, after asserting that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, as well as from the Father, he says, that the Father and Son are but one origin (*unum principium*) of the Holy Spirit.

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## SECTION X.

### THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AFTER THE BUTYCHIAN CONTROVERSY.

THE doctrine of the Trinity, as it was ever held in the western part of the world, had now received its last improvements; and indeed continued with little alteration from the time of Augustine. A few more subtleties, however, were started upon the subject, especially in the East, which require to be noticed.

In 519, some monks of Syria, at the head of whom was P. Fullo, having a dispute with one Victor, a deacon in Constantinople, whom they accused of being a Nestorian, insisted upon his saying that *one of the persons in the Trinity was crucified for us*, an expression which no Nestorian would use. They both appealed to the pope's legates, who



were then at Constantinople. But though these thought the words capable of a good sense, yet since they might be suspected of the Eutychian heresy, they thought it was better not to use them. The monks, not satisfied with this decision, appealed to pope Hormisdas, who condemned the expression, but his successor, John, approved of it. Then, finding that the expression was not generally relished, they proposed to change it, and to say that the *Logos*, or the *word had suffered for us*; but this was also thought to savor too much of Eutychianism. Happily this controversy ended without very serious consequences.

It has been observed that all the ancient orthodox Fathers supposed that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that the *Logos* became a *person* immediately before the creation; having been originally nothing but an *attribute of the divine nature*. This opinion, it seems, was not quite extinct in the year 529. For we then find a decree of a synod of Vaison in France, condemning it, and the preamble shews that the opinion was pretty general. "Because," say they, "not only in the apostolical see, but also in the East, and in all Africa and Italy, heretics blasphemed, saying that the Son of God was not always with the Father, but had a beginning in time, they ordered it to be chanted in the common service, Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, *as it was in the beginning*." A form which has continued to be in use ever since.

The next controversy of which I shall give an account shews, at the same time, the subtlety of the mind of man in devising distinctions, and the impotence of power to restrain or guide it. In the seventh century the emperor Heraclius, considering the detriment which his empire received from the migration of the persecuted Nestorians, and their settlement in Persia, was very desirous of uniting the Monophysites, and thought to prevent the diversity of opinions among them by inducing them to accede to the following proposition (suggested to him, it is said, by Anastasius, the chief of the Jacobites, and who pretended to renounce Eutychianism, in order to be made bishop of Antioch) "there was in Jesus Christ, after the union of the two natures, but one will and one operation." Accordingly he published an edict in favor of this doctrine, which was called that of the *Monothelites*, in 630.

It was afterwards confirmed in a council, and for some time seemed to have the intended effect. But soon after it was the occasion of new and violent animosities, in consequence of the opposition made to it by Sophronius, a monk of Palestine. He, being raised to the see of Jerusalem, was the occasion of a council being held at Constantinople, in 680, which was called the *sixth general council*, in which the doctrine of the Monothelites was condemned. Notwithstanding this condemnation, this doctrine was embraced by the Mardiates, a people who inhabited Mount Libanus, and were afterwards called Maronites, from Maro their first bishop; but in the thirteenth century they joined the church of Rome.

In the condemnation of this doctrine, it is remarkable that it was not stated, nor any thing opposite to it asserted; the writings only which contained it being condemned, as containing propositions "impious, and hurtful to the soul;" and they were therefore ordered to be exterminated and burned. It is, indeed, no wonder that those who are called orthodox with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, should be embarrassed with *two intelligent principles* in one person, in what manner soever they may imagine them to be united. If there be but one intelligent principle, or nature, there can be but one *will*, but if there be *two* intelligent principles, it is natural to expect two *wills*. But then what certainty can there be that these two wills will always coincide, and what inconvenience would there not arise from their difference?

The christian Fathers who first imagined that Christ was the *Logos* of the Father, had no dispute about the sense in which he was *the son of God*. That he was so by adoption, and not in his own nature, as immediately derived from God, had been peculiar to those who held his proper humanity. But in the eighth century, Felix de Urgela, in Spain, would have introduced a distinction in this case, in fact uniting the two opinions. For he held that, with respect to his divine nature, Christ was truly and properly the Son of God, but with respect to his human nature, he was so only by adoption. But this opinion was condemned in several councils, and especially in one held by Charlemagne at Ratisbon, in 792.

But the most ridiculous of all opinions that was, perhaps, ever seriously maintained, and which yet proceeded from

an unfeigned respect to Christ (and which I mention only to relieve my readers from their attention to things that were either of a more serious nature, or that had more serious consequences) was one that was started in the ninth century, about the manner in which Christ was born of the virgin. For Paschasius Radbert, the same who was so much concerned in establishing the doctrine of transubstantiation, composed in this century an elaborate treatise, to prove that Christ was born without his mother's womb being open in the same manner as he supposed himself to have come into the chamber where the disciples were assembled, at the doors were shut.

A controversy much more serious in its consequences as it ended in the final separation of the Greek and Latin churches, was started in the same century, about the *procession of the Holy Spirit*. In the Nicene creed, with the addition which was afterwards made to it, it is said, *I believe in the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the Father* and by this it was probably meant that the Holy Spirit, a distinct person, bore a similar relation to the Father, as a source of divinity, to that which the Son, or the *Logos*, bore to him. But the scriptures expressly asserting that the Spirit was sent by the Son, or proceeded from the Son probably came by degrees to be imagined that his nature was derived from that of the Son, as well as from that of the Father; but we hear no consequence of this, till the year 447, when the words *filioque*, were added to the creed by the order of a synod in Spain, whence it passed into Gaul. In this state things continued till the eighth century, when the question was a good deal agitated, as appeared by a council at Gentilli, held in 767; and in 809, Charlemagne ordered a council to be held at Aix-la-Chapelle, which the question concerning the Holy Spirit was discussed.

In consequence of this, the Latins, in general, at least held that the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son and in the churches of France and Spain the creed was usually read in this manner, *I believe in the Holy Spirit, who from all eternity proceeded from the Father and the Son*. This, however, was not the practice at Rome, and Leo the third, at least for some time, ordered the creed to be read as formerly. At length the Greeks took offence at this and Photius bishop of Constantinople wrote against it,

vation; and after much debating on the subject, in the year 1054, the two churches finally separated, and excommunicated one another on account of this difference.

When an attempt was made to re-unite the two churches, at the council of Ferrara in 1439, this procession of the Holy Spirit was thus explained, viz: "The Holy Spirit is eternal from the Father and the Son, and he proceeds from both eternally, as from a single principle, and by a single procession." If my readers have any ideas on these words, it is more than I can pretend to.

The people in the world were so much addicted to religious controversy as the Greeks. In the latter period of the empire, notwithstanding the declining state of their affairs, and the perpetual inroads first of the Saracens, and afterwards the Turks, it continued to be one of their most serious occupations; and some of the emperors themselves entered into these debates, with as much eagerness as any civilians. One of the most extraordinary instances of this kind occurred in the twelfth century, when a warm contest took place at Constantinople about the sense of these words of the Gospel, *My father is greater than I.* The emperor Manuel Comnenus held a council upon it, in which he obtruded a sense of them, which was that they related to "the Father which was hid in Christ, and which was subject to the Son." He not only caused this decision to be engraven on a table of stone, in the principal church of Constantinople, but by a public edict capital punishments were decreed against all such as should presume to oppose this decision, or teach any doctrine repugnant to it. However, the following Emperor Andronicus cancelled the edict, and did every thing in his power to put an end to this controversy. But whether the severe penalties which he enacted against those who engaged in them had the effect he intended, we are not told. His measures do not seem to have been better adapted to gain his end than those of his predecessors.

I will close the account of these idle disputes, with mentioning one that was started in Barcelona in 1351, concerning the kind of worship that was to be paid to the *blood of Christ*, and which was revived at Brixen in 1462, when Hieronymus de Marchia, a celebrated Franciscan, maintained that the blood which Christ shed upon the cross did not belong to the divine nature, and could not be the

object of divine worship. But the Dominicans opposed this doctrine, and appealed to Pius II. who contrived to put off the decision, so that the question remains undetermined in the church of Rome to this day.

Lastly, to conclude this section, I must observe, that about the tenth century, a festival began to be held in honor of the *Holy Trinity*, in some cathedrals, and in monasteries, and that John XXII. who distinguished himself so much by his opinion concerning the beatific vision, fixed the office for it in 1334, and appointed the celebration of it to be on the first Sunday after Pentecost; and accordingly on this day it has been kept by the church of Rome, and the church of England ever since.

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## SECTION XI.

### A GENERAL VIEW OF THE RECOVERY OF THE GENUINE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY CONCERNING THE NATURE OF CHRIST.

We are not able to trace the doctrine of the proper *humanity of Christ* much later than the council of Nice; the Arian doctrine having been much more prevalent for a considerable time afterwards, especially by the influence of the emperors Constantius and Valens; and the Arians were no less hostile to this primitive doctrine than the Trinitarians themselves. At length, though all the northern nations that embraced christianity were at first of the Arian persuasion, yet, chiefly by the influence of the popes, they became gradually Trinitarians, and continued so till near the reformation.

The first traces that we perceive of the revival of the ancient doctrine are among the Albigenses. For I cannot say that I perceive any among the proper Waldenses, and the Albigenses were probably rather Arians than what we now call Socinians. It would seem, however, that if the Waldenses (the first reformers from popery, and who may be traced as far as the time of Claudius, bishop of Turin) were Trinitarians, they did not originally lay much stress on that doctrine. For in their confession of faith, composed in

1120, which was sixty or seventy years before Valdo, of Lyons, there is nothing under the article of *Jesus* concerning his divinity, nor yet in that of 1544, which was presented to the king of France. In these it was only said that "Christ was promised to the Fathers, and was to make satisfaction for sin." But after the time of the reformation by Luther, the Waldenses, in a confession of faith presented to the king of Bohemia, in 1535, acknowledge expressly "one essence of divinity in three persons, according to the Nicene creed and that of Athanasius," both of which they mention.

But no sooner were the minds of men at full liberty to speculate concerning the doctrines of christianity, and circumstances excited them to it, but, while Luther and Calvin retained the commonly received opinion with respect to Christ, there were many others of that age who revived the primitive doctrine, though there were Arians among them. The greater number, however, were of those who were afterwards called Socinians, from Faustus Socinus, who distinguished himself by his writings among those of them who settled in Poland, where they had many churches, and continued in a flourishing state till the year 1658, when they were, with great cruelty and injustice, banished from that country. This event, however, like others of a similar nature, contributed to the spreading of their doctrine in other countries.

In England this doctrine appears to have had many advocates about the time of the civil war, the most distinguished of whom were the truly learned and pious Mr Biddle, and his patron the most excellent Mr Firmin; and it does not appear that there were many, if any, Arians among them, the term *Unitarian* being then synonymous to what is now called *Socinian*. Afterwards, however, chiefly by the influence of Mr Whiston and Dr Clarke in the established church, and of Mr Emlyn and Mr Pierce among the dissenters, the Arians became so much the more numerous body, that the old Unitarians were in a manner extinct. But of late years, Dr Lardner and others having written in favor of the simple humanity of Christ, this doctrine has spread very much, and seems now to be the prevailing opinion among those who have distinguished themselves by their freedom of thinking in matters of religion. This has been more especially the case since the application made to

parliament by some members of the church of England for relief in the business of subscription, and more particularly so since the erection of the *Unitarian chapel* by Mr Lindsey (who, from a principle of conscience, on this ground only, voluntarily resigned his preferment in the church of England) and the publication of his *Apology*, with its *Sequel*, and other excellent works, in vindication of his conduct and opinion.

It is something extraordinary, that the Socinians in Poland thought it their duty as christians, and indeed essential to christianity, to pray to Jesus Christ, notwithstanding they believed him to be a mere man, whose presence with them, and whose knowledge of their situation, they could not therefore be assured of; and though they had no authority whatever, in the scriptures, for so doing, nor indeed in the practice of the primitive church till near the time of the council of Nice. Socinus himself was of this opinion, and is thought to have given too much of his countenance to the imprisonment and other hardships, which F. David suffered for opposing it. However, the famous Simon Budæus was also of those who denied that any kind of worship ought to be paid to Jesus Christ, contrary to the opinion of Socinus.

Many of those who went by the name of Anabaptists at the beginning of the reformation, held the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ; insomuch that before the time of Socinus, they generally went by that name. Among these, one of the first was Lewis Hetzer, who appeared in 1524, and who was put to death three years after at Constance.

Several of the Socinians of that age held the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit, considering him as a being of a super-angelic order. Of this opinion was Mr Biddle.

The first Arians in England were of the opinion of the original Arians, viz: that Christ was the first of all creatures, and even existed from eternity, by an internal derivation from his eternal Father, that he was the immediate maker of the world, and of all things visible and invisible, and appeared in a divine character to the patriarchs and prophets before he was born of the virgin Mary. But, besides that this doctrine savors of that of the pre-existence of all human souls, a doctrine which has no countenance

in reason or revelation (though it was generally held by philosophers at the time that the Trinitarian and Arian doctrines were broached, and indeed served as a necessary foundation for them) it has staggered many, when they reflect coolly upon the subject, to think that so exalted a being as this, an *unique* in the creation, a being next in dignity and intelligence to God himself, possessed of powers absolutely incomprehensible by us, should inhabit this particular spot in the universe, in preference to any other in the whole extent of perhaps a boundless creation.

It cannot, also, but be thought a little extraordinary, that there should be no trace of the apostles having ever regarded their master in this high light. For, being Jews, they would certainly consider him *at first* as a man like themselves, since no Jew ever expected any other for their Messiah. Indeed, it can never be thought that Peter and others would have made so free with our Lord, as they sometimes did, if they had considered him as their *maker*, and the being who supported the whole universe; and therefore must have been present in every part of the creation, giving his attention to every thing, and exerting his power upon every thing, at the same time that he was familiarly conversing with them. Moreover, the history of the *temptation*, whether it be supposed to be a reality, or a vision, must be altogether improbable on such a supposition. For what could be the offer of the kingdoms of this world, supposing *all* of them, without exception, to have been intended, to him who made the world, and was already in possession of it. And there is no trace of the apostles, after their supernatural illumination, discovering the great mistake they had been under with respect to this subject. On the contrary, they continued to speak as if their former ideas of him had been just, never giving him any higher title than that of *a man approved of God, &c.*

If it be supposed that while Christ was on earth he ceased to discharge the high office he held before, viz: *supporting all things by the word of his power*, there will be some difficulty in supposing *how*, and *by whom*, it was performed in that interval. For certainly it would not have been delegated to Christ, or any other created being if there had not been some impropriety in its being done immediately by God himself. That our Lord had a knowledge of the rank he held before he came into the world, must, I think, be al-



lowed by all Arians, if they give any attention to many circumstances in gospel history, especially to our Lord's praying for the *glory which he had with the Father, before the foundation of the world*, which all Arians suppose to refer to his pre-existent state.

For these, I suppose, and other reasons which might be alledged, a middle opinion has been adopted by some Arians. For they consider Christ merely as a pre-existent Spirit, but one who never had any business out of this world, and had no concern in making it; nor do all of them suppose that Christ was even the medium of divine communications to the patriarchs, &c. But then they do not seem to consider that many of the texts which, when interpreted literally, refer to the pre-existence of Christ, refer also, by the same mode of interpretation, to his being the maker of the world, &c. &c. so that if these texts do not prove both these particulars, they prove neither of them. If those texts which seem to speak of *both* these circumstances, viz: the pre-existence of Christ, and his making of the world, will admit of some *other* construction, much more may those which seem to refer to his pre-existence only.

Besides, if we once give up the idea of Christ having been the maker of the world, and content ourselves with supposing him to have been a being of a much more limited capacity, why may we not be satisfied with supposing him to have been a *mere man*?\* The purposes of his mission certainly could not require more. For it cannot be said that any thing is ascribed to him, that a mere man (aided, as he himself says he was, by the power of God, his Father) was not equal to. And in other respects there seems to be a peculiar propriety in a man like ourselves being employed on such a commission as that of Christ, with respect to *man*; as his being an example to us, and especially in his resurrection being the resurrection of a man like ourselves, and therefore a more proper pattern of our own, and consequently a greater encouragement to us to look for the same. So that all the advantages of the Socinian hypothesis (and it cannot be denied to have some) are abandoned, and yet the peculiar ones of the original Arian hypothesis are not preserved, in the more qualified one, while no new

\* Appendix F.

advantage can be claimed by it. For all that can be said in its favor is, that the mind does not revolt at it quite so much, as at the original hypothesis.

With respect to the Trinitarians of the present age, and especially with us in England, those who have written on the subject are far from being agreed in their opinions, and therefore ought to be classed very differently from one another. But as they can agree in using the same phraseology, and mankind in general look no farther, they pass uncensured, and the emoluments of the establishment are equally accessible to them all. They are all, however, reducible to two classes, viz: that of those who, if they were ingenuous, would rank with Socinians, believing that there is no proper divinity in Christ, besides that of the Father: or else with Tritheists, holding three equal and distinct Gods. For, it cannot be pretended that the word *being*, and *persons*, have any definable difference in their corresponding ideas, when applied to this subject.

The generality of the more strict Trinitarians, make three proper, distinct persons, in the Trinity, independent of each other, which is nothing less than making three distinct Gods. Mr Howe would have helped out this hypothesis by supposing a mutual *self-consciousness* among them. But this is equally arbitrary and ineffectual; since three perfectly distinct, intelligent beings still remain. For supposing a proper self-consciousness to be communicated to *three men*, this circumstance could never be imagined to make them *one man*.

Bishops Pearson and Bull, were of opinion, that "God the Father is the sole fountain of deity, the whole divine nature being communicated from him to the Son and Spirit; yet so that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not separate or separable from the divinity, but still exist in it." But this *union* is a mere hypotheticalal thing, of which we can neither have *evidence* nor *ideas*. If the Father be the sole fountain of deity, he only is *God*, in the proper sense of the word, and the two others can be nothing but *creatures*, whether they exist *in* the deity (of which also we have no ideas) or *out* of him.

Dr Wallis thought the distinction of these three persons was only *modal*; which seems, says Dr Doddridge, to have been Tillotson's opinion also. If so, they were both of

them nothing more than Sabellians, whom all the ancients classed with Unitarians.

In the same class also ought to be ranked Dr Thomas Burnett, who maintained "one self-existent and two dependent beings, but asserted that the two latter are so united to, and inhabited by, the former, that, by virtue of that union, divine perfections may be ascribed, and divine worship paid to them." This, too, was evidently the opinion of Dr Doddridge himself, and probably that of a great number of those who were educated under him, and perhaps, also, that of Dr Watts. But, in fact, this scheme only enables persons to use the language, and to enjoy the reputation of orthodoxy, when they have no just title to either. For the divinity of the Father *dwelling in*, or ever so intimately *united to*, what is confessed to be a *creature*, is still no other than the divinity of the Father in that creature, and by no means any proper divinity of his own.

Besides, whatever we may fancy we can do by *words*, which are arbitrary things, and which we can twist and vary as we please, the properties and prerogatives of divinity *cannot* be communicated. The Divine Being cannot give his own supremacy, and whatever he can *give*, he must have a power of *withdrawing*, so that if he should communicate any extraordinary powers to *Christ*, or to the *Holy Spirit* (supposing this to have been a distinct being) he can, whenever he pleases, withdraw those powers; and for the same reason, as he voluntarily gave them their *being*, he must have a power of taking away *that* also. How then can they make two parts of a proper *Trinity in the divine nature*, and be said to be *equal in power and glory* with the Father?

Christians should be ashamed of such unworthy subterfuges as these. The most fearless integrity, and the truest simplicity of language, become christians, who wish to know, and to propagate truth. Certainly, if men be *deceived*, they are not *instructed*. All that we can gain by ambiguous language is to make our readers, or bearers, imagine that we think as they do. But this is so far from disposing them to change their opinions, or to lay aside their prejudices, that it can only tend to confirm them. As to any inconveniences that we may bring upon ourselves by an undisguised avowal of whatever we apprehend to be *the truth*; we may assure ourselves, that the *God of truth*, whom we

honor by our conduct, will reward us, at least with that *inward peace of mind*, which can never be enjoyed by those who so miserably prevaricate in a business of such moment as this. And what are all the honors and emoluments of this world, without that satisfaction of mind?

Light having thus, at length sprung up in the christian world, after so long a season of darkness, it will, I doubt not, increase to *the perfect day*. The great article of the *unity of God* will, in time, be uniformly professed by all who bear the christian name; and then, but not before, may we hope and expect, that, being also freed from other corruptions and embarrassments, it will recommend itself to the acceptance of Jews and Mahometans, and become the religion of the whole world.\* But so long as christians in general are chargeable, with this fundamental error, of worshipping more gods than one, Jews and Mahometans will always hold their religion in abhorrence. As, therefore, we wish to see the general spread of the gospel, we should exert ourselves to restore it to its pristine purity in this respect.

\* Appendix G.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.



PART II.

THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS RELATING TO THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

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As the doctrine of the *divine unity* was infringed by the introduction of that of the divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit (as a person distinct from the Father) so the doctrine of the *natural placability of the divine being*, and our ideas of the equity of his government, have been greatly debased by the gradual introduction of the modern doctrine of *atonement*, which represents the Divine Being as withholding his mercy from the truly penitent, till a full satisfaction be made to his justice; and for that purpose, as substituting his own innocent Son in the place of sinful men.

This corruption of the genuine doctrine of revelation is connected with the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; because it is said, that sin, as an offence against an *infinite being*, requires an *infinite satisfaction*, which can only be made by an *infinite person*, that is, one who is no less than God himself. Christ, therefore, in order to make this infinite satisfaction for the sins of men, must himself be God equal to the Father. The justice of God being now fully satisfied by the death of Christ, the sinner is acquitted. Moreover, as the sins of men have been thus imputed to Christ, his righteousness is, on the other hand, imputed to

them; and thus they are accepted of God, not on account of what they have done themselves, but for what Christ had done for them.

As I conceive this doctrine to be a gross misrepresentation of the character and moral government of God, and to affect many other articles in the scheme of christianity, greatly disfiguring and depraving it; I shall shew, in a fuller manner than I mean to do with respect to any other corruption of christianity, that it has no countenance whatever in reason, or the scriptures; and therefore that the whole doctrine of *atonement*, with every modification of it, has been a departure from the primitive and genuine doctrine of christianity.

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## SECTION I.

### THAT CHRIST DID NOT DIE TO MAKE SATISFACTION FOR THE SINS OF MEN.

It is hardly possible not to suspect the truth of this doctrine of *atonement*, when we consider that the general *maxims* to which it may be reduced, are no where laid down or asserted, in the scriptures, but others quite contrary to them.

It is usual with the sacred writers, both of the Old and New Testament, to assign the reasons of such of the divine proceedings respecting the human race, as are more difficult to be comprehended, and the necessity and propriety of which are not very obvious, and might be liable to be called in question. Such is the divine condescension, to the weakness, short-sightedness, and even the perverseness of men. He is willing that we should be satisfied that *all his ways are equal*, that they are all just, reasonable, and expedient, even in cases where our concern in them is not very apparent. Much more, then, might we expect an explanation of the divine measures, when the very end which is answered by them is lost if we do not enter into the reasons of them, as is evidently the case with respect to the doctrine of atonement; since the proper end of the meas-

ures which this opinion represents the Divine Being to have taken was the *display of his justice*, and of his *abhorrence of sin*, to the subjects of his government.

Is it not surprising, then, that, in all the books of scripture, we nowhere find the *principle* on which the doctrine of atonement is founded. For though the sacred writers often speak of the malignant nature of sin, they never go a single step farther, and assert, that "it is of so heinous a nature, that God cannot pardon it without an adequate satisfaction being made to his justice, and the honor of his laws and government." Nay, the contrary sentiment occurs every where, viz: that repentance and a good life are *of themselves*, sufficient to recommend us to the divine favor. Notwithstanding so many notorious sinners, particular persons, and whole nations, are addressed by inspired persons, and their conduct strongly remonstrated against in the course of the sacred history, none of them are ever directed to any thing farther than their own hearts and lives. "Return unto me, and I will return unto you," is the substance of all they say upon these occasions.

Certainly, then, we ought to suspend our assent to a doctrine of this important nature, which no person can pretend to deduce except by way of *inference* from particular expressions, which have much the air of figure and allusion. On the other hand, it seems natural to explain a few obscure expressions and passages, by other numerous, plain and striking texts, relating to the same subject; and these uniformly represent God as our universal parent, pardoning sinners *freely*, that is, from his natural goodness and mercy whenever they truly repent and reform their lives.

All the declarations of divine mercy are made without reserve or limitation to the truly penitent, through all the books of scripture, without the most distant hint of any regard being had to the sufferings or merit of any being what ever. It is needless to quote many examples of this. On only, and that almost the first that occurs, may suffice. It is the declaration that God made of his character to Moses presently after the Israelites had sinned in making the golden calf.—Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7, "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." In the New Testament, also, w

are said to be *justified freely by the grace of God*.—Rom. iii. 24. Tit. iii. 7. Now, certainly, if the favor had been procured by the suffering of another person, it could not have been said to be bestowed *freely*.

Agreeably to this, David, and other pious persons in the Old Testament, in their penitential addresses to the Divine Being, never plead any thing more than their own repentance, and the free mercy of God. Thus David, Ps. xxv. 6, 7—“Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindness, for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Lord.”

If the doctrine of atonement be true, it cannot, however, be pretended that David, or any other pious person in the Old Testament, was at all acquainted with it; and therefore the *belief* of it cannot be necessary to salvation, or indeed of much consequence. Had this doctrine on which so much stress is now laid, been true, we should have expected that Job, David, Hezekiah, Nehemiah, and Daniel, should have been reproved whenever they presumed to mention their integrity before God, and took refuge in his mercy only, without interposing the sufferings or merits of the Messiah to mediate for them. Also, some strong clauses should have been annexed to the absolute and unlimited declarations of the divine mercy that are so frequent in the Old Testament, which would have restrained and fixed their meaning, in order to prevent the dangerous constructions to which they are now too much open.

Indeed, admitting the popular doctrine of atonement, the whole of the Old Testament is, throughout, a most unaccountable book, and the religion it exhibits is defective in the most essential article. Also, the Jews, in our Savior's time, had certainly no idea of this doctrine. If they had, they would have expected a suffering and not a triumphant Messiah.

With respect to forgiveness of injuries, the Divine Being, always proposes his own conduct to our imitation; and in the Lord's prayer we are required “to forgive others, as we hope to be forgiven ourselves.” Now it is certainly required of us, that if our brother only *repent*, we shall forgive him, even though he should repeat his offence seven times a day.—Luke xvii. 4. On the same generous maxim,



therefore, we cannot but conclude that ~~the~~ Divine Being acts towards us.

The parables, by which our Lord represents the forgiving mercy of God, are the farthest possible from being calculated to give us an idea of his requiring any thing more than merely repentance on the part of the offender. What else can we infer from the parable of the prodigal son, or the master whose servant owed him a thousand talents, &c.

If our Lord had considered the Jews as having lost sight of the fundamental principle of their religion, he would certainly have pointed it out to them, and have drawn their attention to it. If, therefore, the proper end of his coming into the world had been to make satisfaction to the justice of God by his death (which certainly they who did not expect a suffering Messiah could have no idea of) he would have taken some opportunity of explaining it to them. But nothing of this kind occurs in the whole course of his preaching; and though he frequently speaks of his death, it is never as having had such an end.

Our Lord speaks of repentance, of good works, and of the mercy of God in the very same strain with that of Moses and the prophets, and without giving any intimation that their doctrine was defective on those heads. In his account of the proceedings of the day of judgment, the righteous are represented as thinking humbly of themselves, but they never refer themselves to the sufferings or merit of their judge, as the ground of their hopes; though nothing can be conceived to have been more natural, and pertinent on the occasion.

Whenever our Lord speaks of the *object of his mission*, and death, as he often does, it is either in a more general way, as for the salvation of the world, to do the will of God, to fulfil the scripture prophecies, &c. or more particularly to give the fullest proof of his mission by his resurrection from the dead, and an assurance of a similar resurrection of all his followers. He also compares his being raised upon the cross to the elevation of the serpent in the wilderness, and to seed buried in the ground, as necessary to its future increase. But all these representations are quite foreign to any thing in the doctrine of atonement.

When our Lord takes so much pains to reconcile the apostles to his death, in several discourses, of which we have a particular account in the gospel of John, he never tells them

that he must die in order to procure the pardon of their sins ; nor do we find the least hint of it in his solemn intercessory prayer before his death. On the contrary, he speaks of their sufferings and death in the same light as his own. To James and John he says, *ye shall, indeed, be baptized with my baptism, and drink of the cup which I drink of.*—Mark x. 39. And he recommends his own example to them, in laying down his life for them.—John xv. 12.

After he is risen from the dead, he keeps the same profound silence on the subject of the supposed true and only great cause of his death ; and as little do we find of it in the history of the book of Acts, after the minds of the apostles were fully illuminated with the knowledge of the gospel. They only “call upon all men every where to “repent and believe the gospel, for the remission of their “sins.”

The apostle Peter, in his discourse to the Jews, immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit, and again in the temple, upon the cure of the impotent man, paints in the blackest colors the sin of the Jews in crucifying our Lord ; but though he exhorts them to repentance, he says not one word of *satisfaction, expiation, or atonement*, to allay any apprehension they might have of the divine justice. And a fairer opportunity he could not have wished to introduce the subject. How fine a turn might he have then given to the popular cry of the same nation, at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, *His blood be on us and on our children.* Instead of this, he only exhorts them to repent, and to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, for the remission of their sins. What he says concerning the death of Christ, is, only that *he was delivered to them by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, and that with wicked hands they put him to death.*—Acts, ii. 23—iii. 17.

Stephen, in his long speech at his trial, makes frequent mention of the death of Christ, but he says not one word of his being a propitiation for sin, to lead his hearers to consider it in that light.

What could have been a fairer opportunity for introducing the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, than the Evangelist Philip had, when he was explaining to the eunuch the only prophecy in the Old Testament which can be construed to represent it in that light ; and

yet in the whole story, which is not a very concise one, there is no mention of it. And when the eunuch declares his faith, which gave him a right to christian baptism, it is simply this, that "Jesus is the Son of God."

The apostle Peter, preaching to Cornelius, the first of the proper Gentile converts, is still silent about this fundamental article of the christian faith. Much he says of Jesus Christ, that *God anointed him with the Holy Spirit, and with power, that he went about doing good, &c.* He also speaks of his death and resurrection, but nothing at all of our good works being accepted through his sufferings or merit. On the contrary, what he says upon the occasion, may, without any forced construction, be turned against this favorite opinion. *Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but that, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.*—Acts x. 34, 35.

The apostle Paul, before the Jews at Antioch, Acts xiii. 28, at Thessalonica, ch. xvii. before Agrippa, ch. xxvi. and at Rome, ch. xxviii. on all these occasions, treats, and sometimes pretty largely, concerning the death of Christ; but never with any other view than as an event that was foretold by the prophets. He shows the Jews the aggravation of their sins, and exhorts them to repentance and to faith in Christ, but nothing farther. In his preaching to heathens at Lystra, Acts xiv. and at Athens, ch. xvii. he discourses concerning the supremacy and goodness of the one living and true God; and exhorts them to turn from their lying vanities, for that though "at the times of their former ignorance God had winked, he now commands all men every where to repent; because he has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." Now in all this, there is not one word of the true gospel scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ according to some. There is nothing evangelical; all is legal and carnal.

When we find the apostles to be absolutely silent, where we cannot but think there was the greatest occasion to open themselves freely concerning the doctrine of atonement; when, in their most serious discourses they make use of language that really sets it aside; when they never once

directly assert the necessity of any satisfaction for sin, or the insufficiency of our good works alone to entitle us to the favor of God and future happiness, must we build so important an article of faith on mere *hints* and *inferences* from their writings? The doctrine is of too much importance to stand on such a foundation.

It has been pretended that the apprehension of some farther satisfaction being made to divine justice, besides repentance and reformation, is necessary to allay the fears of sincere penitents. They would else, it is said, be subject to perpetual alarms, lest all they could do would be ineffectual to restore them to the divine favor. But till clear instances be produced of persons actually distressed with these fears and doubts, I can treat this case as no other than an imaginary one.

In fact, there is no reason to believe that any of the human race, if they be left to their own natural unperverted apprehension of things, will ever fall into such doubts and uncertainties as all mankind are sometimes represented to be involved in. On the contrary, that God is a merciful Being seems to have been a favorite opinion of all mankind in all ages; except in some religious systems in which the object of worship was not the true God, but some being of a low and revengeful nature, like the most capricious and depraved of mankind.

We have seen in the Old Testament that the Jews had never any other idea than that God was placable on repentance. We find no other sentiment in Job, or his friends, and certainly no other among the Ninevites, or among the Jews of later ages, as the books of Apocrypha, Philo, Josephus, and all their later writings, testify. We also see nothing of any other opinion in the doctrine of the Hindoos, or other oriental nations.

It is remarkable, that Dr Clarke, when, like others before him, he represents all mankind as absolutely at a loss on what terms God would receive offenders into his favor, produces not so much as a single *fact* or *quotation*, in support of what he asserts, though he is known to be peculiarly happy in his choice of the most pertinent ones on all other occasions. He gives us, indeed, a general reference to *Plato's Alcibiades the second*; but I do not find, in all the conversation between Socrates and Alcibiades in that dialogue, that either of them drops the least hint of their uncer-

tainty about the divine favor in case of sincerity, or the least doubt that human virtue is not, *of itself*, a sufficient recommendation to his acceptance. All that they appear to be at a loss about is for some one to teach them what to pray for, lest, through their ignorance, they should ask of the Gods things hurtful to themselves. They express no want of any person to intercede with God for them, or one whose sufferings or merit, might avail with God for their acceptance.

Besides, if men should have any doubt concerning the divine placability, I do not see that they must therefore imagine that he would accept the sufferings of *another* instead of *theirs*; but rather, that he would be absolutely inexorable, and rigorous, in exacting *of themselves*, the punishment of their crimes. Fears of this kind it is very possible that men may have entertained, but then there is nothing in the doctrine of atonement that is calculated to allay such fears. But the divine declarations concerning his own placability, which abound in the scriptures, must be sufficient to answer every purpose of that kind.

It is urged, however, in favor of the doctrine of atonement, that the scheme is absolutely necessary in the moral government of God, because that, on different principles, no satisfaction is made to his offended justice. But I answer, it becomes us ever to bear in mind that the divine justice is not a blind principle, which, upon provocation, craves satisfaction indiscriminately, of all that come within its reach, or that throw themselves in its way. In the Deity, *justice* can be nothing more than a modification of *goodness* or *benevolence*, which is his sole governing principle, the object and end of which is the happiness of his creatures and subjects. This happiness being of a moral nature, must be chiefly promoted by such a constitution of the moral government we are under, as shall afford the most effectual motives to induce men to regulate their lives well. Every degree of severity, therefore, that is so circumstanced as not to have this tendency, viz: to promote repentance and the practice of virtue, must be inconsistent with the fundamental principle of the moral government of God, and even with justice itself, if it have the same end with divine goodness, the happiness of God's creatures.

Now, that any severity is necessary to be exercised on such offenders as are truly penitent, even in human govern-

ments, is owing to the imperfection of government when administered by men. For were magistrates judges of the hearts of men, there would result no manner of inconvenience from pardoning all offenders who were become truly penitent and reformed; since hereby the offenders themselves would become useful members of society, and the penetration of the magistrates would effectually prevent any persons from taking advantage of such lenity.

This is exactly the case in the moral government of an all-seeing God. Here, therefore, measures formed upon the justest principles of equity may be taken, without hazarding the ends of government, measures which might be pernicious in any human administration. In the all-perfect government of God, therefore, there is no occasion to exercise any severity, even on penitents themselves. How absurd then it would be to exercise it on *others*, which yet the doctrine of atonement supposes. Certainly, then, it must give the mind unfavorable impressions of the divine government, which, if not corrected by something else, must have an unfriendly aspect upon their virtue. Yet, notwithstanding this, the influence which the doctrine of atonement has upon *practice* is strongly urged in its favor.

Admitting, however, that the popular doctrine of atonement should raise our ideas of the *justice*, or rather the severity of God, it must, in the same proportion, sink our ideas of his *mercy*; so that what the doctrine may have seemed to gain on the one hand, it loses on the other. And, moreover, though, in order to the forgiveness of sin, some farther severity on the part of God be supposed necessary, yet, according to the doctrine of atonement, this severity is so circumstanced, as entirely to lose its effect. For if the severity be to work upon men, the offenders themselves should feel it. It will be the same thing with the bulk of mankind, who are the persons to be wrought upon, whether the Divine Being animadvert upon the vices that are repented of, or not, if the offenders know that they themselves shall never feel it. This disinterested generosity might, indeed, induce some offenders to spare the lives of their substitutes; but if the sufferings had been endured already by some person of sufficient dignity, on the behalf of all future transgressors, it is impossible to conceive how the consideration of it should be any restraint at all; since noth-

ing that any man could then do would expose any other to farther suffering.

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## SECTION II.

### OF THE TRUE END AND DESIGN OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

HAVING shown that the death of Christ is not to be considered as having made atonement, or satisfaction, to God for the sins of men, I shall now endeavor to show what the end and use of it really were. Now the principal design of the life, as well as the death of Christ, seems to be not so much what we may expect to find in any particular texts, or single passages of the evangelists, or other writers of the New Testament, as what is suggested by a view of the history itself, what may be called the *language of the naked facts*, and what cannot but be understood wherever they are known. What has been written by christians may assist us to conceive more accurately concerning some particulars relating to christianity, but that must be of more importance, which does not require to be written, what the facts themselves necessarily speak, without any interpretation. Let us, therefore, examine what it is that may be clearly deduced from the history, and how much of christianity could not but have been known, if nothing had been written, provided a general idea of the life and death of Christ could have been transmitted to us in any other way.

If, then, we attend to the general facts recorded by the evangelists, we cannot but find that they afford the most satisfactory evidence of a resurrection and a future life. The history of Jesus contains (what cannot be said of any other history in the world) an authentic account of a man like ourselves, invested by almighty God with most extraordinary powers, not only teaching, without the least ambiguity or hesitation, the doctrine of a future life of retribution for all mankind, and directing the views of his disciples to it, in preference to any thing in this world; but passing his own life in a voluntary exclusion from all that men call great, and that others pursue with so much assi-

duity; and, in obedience to the will of God calmly giving up his life, in circumstances of public ignomy and torture, in the fullest persuasion, that he should receive it again with advantage. And in the accomplishment of his own prediction, he actually rose from the dead the third day. After this, he was seen by all those persons who had the most intimate knowledge of him before, and he did not leave them till after having conversed with them, at intervals, for a considerable time, in order to give them the most satisfactory evidence of the identity of his person.

Since, then, the great object of our Lord's mission was to teach the doctrine of a resurrection to a future immortal life, we see the necessity of his own death and resurrection as a *proof of his doctrine*. For whatever he might have *said*, or *done* while he lived, he could not have given the most satisfactory proof even of his own belief of a resurrection, unless he had actually died in the full expectation of it. Hence it is that the apostles glory in the consideration both of the death and of the resurrection of Christ, as 1 Cor. i. 22.—*The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God; also, 1 Cor. xv. 14, &c.—If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.*

There is another manner in which we may be assisted in forming an idea of what is most essential to christianity. Suppose a number of persons, educated in the christian faith, to be cast upon a remote island, without any bible. It is probable they would first of all lose all distinct remembrance of the apostolical epistles, which may show that these are a part of the New Testament the least necessary to be attended to. After this, they would be apt to forget the particular discourses of our Lord; but the last thing they would retain would be the idea of a man, who had the most extraordinary power, spending his time in performing benevolent miracles, voluntarily submitting to many inconveniences, and last of all to a painful death, in a certain expectation of being presently raised to an immortal life, and to great happiness, honor, and power after death; and that these his expectations were actually fulfilled. They would



also remember that this person always recommended the practice of virtue, and assured his followers that they would also be raised again to immortal life and happiness, if they persevered in well doing, as he had done.

Now, allowing that those persons thus cut off from all communication with other christians, should retain only these general ideas of christianity (and it is hardly to be conceived that they could retain less) yet, would any body say that they were not christians, or that they were not possessed of the most important and practical truths of christianity, those truths which are most instrumental in purifying the heart and reforming the life?

Though there is no occasion to cite *particular texts* for what is clearly suggested by the *history* itself, and what could not but be known of it, if all that has been written concerning it were lost, yet, express texts are by no means wanting to shew that the true and proper design of the gospel, and consequently of the preaching and of the death of Christ, was to ascertain and exemplify the great doctrines of a resurrection and of a future state. I shall content myself with reciting only a few of them. John vi. 40.—*This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.* John xi. 25, 26.—*I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* John x. 10.—*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* Rev. i. 18.—*I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of the grave.*

The apostles, in all their writings, seem clearly to have understood this to have been the principal object of the mission of Christ. Thus Paul says concerning Christ, 2 Tim. i. 10.—*He abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

This doctrine of a resurrection to immortal life, and the making an express regard to it the principal sanction of the laws of virtue, is not only essential in the christian scheme, but is an advantage peculiar to christianity. The discourses of our Savior relating to this subject appear, at first sight, to be in a strain quite different from that of any other teacher of virtue before him, inspired or uninspired.

And what is above all, the *example* of a man, either living or dying, in the certain prospect of a speedy resurrection to an immortal life, was never before exhibited on the face of the earth. The object of the missions of other prophets was always something inferior, and introductory to this.

It is allowed that the argument for our having an interest in a future life, drawn from the consideration of the resurrection of Christ, is weakened by an opinion that represents him as of a nature superior to our own. But if, with the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, we conceive him to be *in all respects as we are*, his resurrection cannot but be considered, as a pattern and a pledge of ours. Hence the peculiar propriety of the divine appointment, explained by Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 21.—*That since by man came death, by man should also come the resurrection of the dead; and that as in consequence of our relation to Adam all should die, so in consequence of our relation to Christ, who is called the second Adam, we should all be made alive.* The same argument is also more fully illustrated by the same apostle in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, in which, what we suffer by one man is contrasted by what we gain by another man.

The great object of the mission and death of Christ being to give the fullest proof of a future life of retribution, in order to supply the strongest motives to virtue, we see the greatest propriety in those texts, in which this ultimate end of his sufferings is immediately connected with them, as Titus ii. 14.—*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Eph. v. 25, 26.—*Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, &c.* Rev. i. 5.—*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c.*

Also, true religion being by means of christianity extended to the gentile world, as well as the Jews, this ultimate end, viz. the abolition of the Jewish ritual, at least with respect to the Gentiles, is sometimes immediately connected with the mention of his death, as Eph. ii. 13. *But now in Christ Jesus, they who were afar off are made nigh, by the blood of Christ.* Col. ii. 14. *Blotting out the hand writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.*

Besides the principal object of the death of Christ, other uses of it are occasionally mentioned, but they are such as are perfectly consistent with this. For instance, Christ having submitted to all these sufferings for so great and benevolent a purpose, it was highly proper that he should *be rewarded* for it; and the Divine Being has, therefore, in this case, exhibited an illustrious example of the manner in which he will always crown obedience to his will. Moreover, Christ, being a man like ourselves, and therefore influenced by hopes and fears, it was reasonable that he should have a view to this glorious reward, in order to support him under his sufferings, as is particularly expressed in the following passages. Rom. xiv. 9. *For this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.* Heb. xiii. 2. *Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

As Christ was intended to be our *example*, and pattern, in his life, death, and resurrection from the dead, his sufferings were absolutely necessary to qualify him for the work on which he was sent. This is expressed in the following passages, which also clearly show the necessity of his being a man like ourselves, in order to undergo sufferings like ours. Heb. ii. 10. *For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one (that is of one nature and rank) because he is not ashamed to call them brethren. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood (that is, are men) he also himself likewise took part of the same (that is, was a man also) Wherefore, in all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. For in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.* Heb. v. 8, 9.—*Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.*

As Christ was the person foretold by the ancient Jewish prophets, and he carried the proper and ultimate object of the law of Moses into execution, in a more extensive manner than it had ever been done before, giving a proper ex-

tent and force to its moral precepts, Christ is properly said to have come to *fulfil the law*, and for the accomplishment of ancient prophecies. Matt. v. 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* Acts iii. 18. *But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

Lastly, as the end of Christ's mission necessarily required him to undergo a great variety of sufferings, he is, with propriety, said to come in order to exhibit to mankind a most perfect *example* of voluntary obedience to the will of God, under the severest trial of it; and his *example* is justly proposed to us under our trials and sufferings. 1 Pet. ii. 21. *Christ also hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.* 1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he (that is, Christ) laid down his life for us; and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

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### SECTION III.

OF THE SENSE IN WHICH THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS REPRESENTED AS A SACRIFICE, AND OTHER FIGURATIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF IT.

HAVING explained the one great and primary end of the life and death of Christ, and also pointed out the other secondary and subordinate ends which were likewise really answered by it, I shall now attempt to illustrate the *figurative representations* that are made of it by the sacred writers. These have unfortunately misled many christians, and have been the occasion of their entertaining opinions concerning the end of Christ's coming into the world, quite different from those which appear upon the very face of the history; opinions which are contradicted by the whole tenor of revelation, and which are extremely injurious to the character of the ever blessed God.

The most remarkable of these figurative representations of the death of Christ, is that in which he is compared to a

*sacrifice*; and as a figure, it is just and beautiful. In every sacrifice the victim is slain for the benefit of the person on whose account it is offered; so Christ dying to procure the greatest possible benefit to the human race, is said to have given his life a sacrifice for us; and moreover as the end of the gospel is to promote the reformation of sinners, in order to procure the pardon of sin, the death of Christ is more expressly compared to a *sin offering*.

These points of resemblance between the death of Christ and the Jewish sacrifices, sufficiently justify and explain the language of the scriptures relating to it. From this circumstance, however, has arisen a notion, that the sacrifices prescribed in the Jewish law were *types* of this great, complete, and expiatory sacrifice of the death of Christ, which now supersedes and abrogates them. On account, therefore, of the great stress which has been laid on this view of the death of Christ, I shall consider it more fully than it would otherwise deserve.

All the texts in which Christ is indisputably represented as a sacrifice, are the following. Eph. v. 2. *Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor.* Heb. vii. 27. *Who needed not daily to offer sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people; for this he did once when he offered up himself.* The same allusion is also frequent in this epistle. We find it also, 1 Pet. i. 2, 18. Rev. v. 6. and 1 John, ii. 2. *and he is the propitiation for our sins.* The same *expression* occurs, ch. iv. 10. But these two are the only places in which the word *propitiation* (*ilasmos*) occurs in the New Testament.

With respect to these texts, it is obvious to remark, that the far greater part of them are from one epistle of an unknown writer (for it is not *certain*, at least, that the epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul) which is allowed, in other respects to abound with the strongest figures, metaphors, and allegories; and the rest are too few to bear the very great stress that has been laid upon them. Besides, the *manner* in which this idea is introduced in these texts, which is only *indirectly*, intimates plainly enough, that a few circumstances of resemblance are sufficient to justify the allusion. Had the writers really considered the death of Christ as the *intended antitype* of the sacrifices under the law; had this been the great and principal end of his

death, it would have been asserted in the fullest and plainest manner, and references to it would certainly have been much more *direct* and frequent than they are.

It is something similar to this view of the death of Christ, as a sacrifice, that he is also called a *priest*, and a *high priest*, especially by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. But this very circumstance might have given us to understand, that both the representations are merely figurative, because both taken together are hardly consistent, at least they make a very harsh figure, and introduce confusion into our ideas.

That the death of Christ is no proper sacrifice for sin, or the intended antetype of the Jewish sacrifices, may be inferred from the following considerations.

1. Though the death of Christ is frequently mentioned, or alluded to, by the ancient prophets, it is never spoken of as a sin offering. For the propriety of our translation of Isaiah liii. 10. may be doubted; or if it be retained, it cannot be proved to exhibit any thing more than a figurative allusion. Now that this great event of the death of Christ should be foretold, with so many particular circumstances, and yet that the proper, the ultimate, and the great end of it should not be pointed out, is unaccountable.

2. Great weight is given to this observation by the converse of it, viz. that the Jewish sacrifices are no where said, in the Old Testament, to have any reference to another more perfect sacrifice, as might have been expected if they really had had any such reference. On the contrary, whenever the legal sacrifices are declared by the prophets to be insufficient to procure the favor of God, as they often are, the only thing that is ever opposed to them, as of more value in the sight of God, is *good works*, or *moral virtue*, as Ps. li. 16, 17.—*Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of the Lord are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* To the same purpose see Isaiah i. 11. &c. Hos. vi. 6. Amos v. 22. Mic. vi. 6.

The wisest of the Jews in our Savior's time speak exactly in the same strain, and in the presence of our Lord himself; who is so far from disapproving of it, that he gives his own sanction to the sentiment in the most open manner. A scribe says, Mark xii. 32. *There is one God, and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, &c.*

*is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.* A Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said *us thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* Having perfect knowledge of the *Law*, he was prepared for en the *Gospel*.

The general strain of the passages quoted and to above, cannot but appear very extraordinary, if ish sacrifices had in reality, any reference to the Christ, and were intended to prefigure it, as typ antetype.

3. Many other things, besides the death of Ch expressly called *sacrifices* by the sacred writers ; be universally allowed to be in a figurative sense or may not this be the case with the death of Chri Is. lxvi. 20. *They shall bring all your brethren for ing unto the Lord.* Rom. xii. 1. *That ye pres bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to G is your reasonable service.*

4. Christians in general are frequently called p well as Christ himself. 1 Pet. ii. 5. *Ye are a hoi hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.*

5. The death of Christ cannot be considered a sacrifice for sin, because many things essential sacrifice were wanting in it, especially its not be ded and presented by the sinner.

6. We meet with many figures in the writi apostles no less bold than this. Thus the body is the *veil* through which we pass to the holy We are said to be *circumcised* in his circumcis be *buried* with him by baptism. Our sins a with him, and we *rise again* with him in *new* After meeting with figures like these (and might be mentioned quite as harsh as these) c prised that Christ, who died to promote the r the world, should be called *a sacrifice for the*

Still less shall we wonder at this, if we co miliar all the rites of the Jewish religion wer of the apostles, so that whatever they were if it bore any resemblance to that ritual, it v trude itself. It must also be considered, th Christ was the greatest objection to christi Jews and Gentiles ; and what could tend this prejudice, with both of them, and espe

than taking every opportunity of describing it in language which to them was so familiar and respectable?

7. It has been said by some, that sacrifices were originally intended to prefigure the death of Christ; and that, in themselves considered, they were of such a nature, that they would never have been thought of by man, without an express command from God.

But whether sacrifices were originally appointed by God, or a method which men themselves thought (which I think not improbable) of expressing their gratitude to God, for his favors to them, when we consider the circumstances in which they were used, they appear easily to fall under either the general notion of *gifts*, or the more particular one of *entertainments*, furnished at the expense of the person who was dependent and obliged. They were therefore always considered as *acknowledgments* for favors received from, or of *homage* due to, God or man. In like manner, they might be used to deprecate the anger of God or man, or to procure favors of any other kind, by begetting in the mind of our patron an opinion of our respect and esteem for him.

To all these purposes served sacrifices before and under the law of Moses. Without a sacrifice, or some other gift, the Jews were not allowed to approach the tabernacle, or the temple, that is, the house of God. They were expressly commanded *never to appear before God empty, lest wrath should be upon them*, which was agreeable to a custom that is still universal in the East, never to appear in the presence of any prince, or great man, without a present.

That an offering of an animal upon the altar, was considered in the law of Moses in the same light as any other offering or gift, and a sacrifice for sin, or any other sacrifice, is evident from several facts in the Jewish history, and from several circumstances in their ritual. In many cases, where a person was not able to provide an animal for a sacrifice, an offering of flour was accepted. The Philistines, also, when they were convinced of their fault in taking captive the ark of God, returned it with a present of golden mice and emerods, to make atonement for them, evidently in the place of a sacrifice; and from the Grecian history it appears that (*anatheemata*) or presents of gold, silver, statues, &c. were considered by them as equivalent to expensive sacrifices for any purpose whatever.



In the Jewish ritual the ceremonies attending a sacrifice for sin did not differ in any thing material, from those that were used in any other sacrifice. Whatever was the occasion of the sacrifice, the person who offered it, laid his hand, in a solemn manner, on the head of the victim, which was the formal *presentation* of it, the animal was slain, and the blood sprinkled. Part of the victim was always burnt on the altar, a part was the portion of the priest, and, in some cases, the remainder was eaten by the offerer. When, therefore, the Jews sacrificed an animal as a sin offering, the use and signification of the *sacrifice itself*, were the same as if it had been intended to procure any other favor; and there was no more *bearing of sin*, or any thing properly *vicarious* in the offering of the animal that was made a sin-offering, than if it had been sacrificed on an occasion of thanksgiving, or any other account.

From all that has been said concerning sacrifices under the law, and the history of their uses, they appear to have been considered as *circumstances attending an address to the Deity*, and not as things that were of any avail in themselves. It was not the sacrifice, but the priest that was said to *make atonement*; nor was a sacrifice universally necessary for that purpose. For, upon several occasions, we read of atonement being made when there was no sacrifice. Phinehas is said to have made atonement for the children of Israel by slaying the transgressors, Num. xxv. 13. Moses made atonement by prayer only, Ex. xxxii. 30. And Aaron made atonement with incense.

Whenever the writers of the Old Testament treat largely concerning sacrifices, it is evident the idea they had of them was the same with that which they had concerning *gifts*, or presents of any other nature. Thus the Divine Being is represented as saying, Ps. l. 9, &c.—*I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goat out of thy fold; for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High, &c.*

Lastly, if the death of Christ had been a proper sacrifice, and the forgiveness of sins had depended upon it only, we

should hardly have found the *resurrection of Christ* represented as having had the same use, as Rom. iv. 25.—*He was raised again for our justification.* As figures of speech, these things are consistent enough, but not otherwise.

8. Had the death of Christ been simply and properly a *sacrifice*, we should not expect to find it denominated in any manner that was inconsistent with this representation, which, however, is very common in the scriptures. If there be a resemblance to the death of Christ in those things to which they compare it, the writers are sufficiently justified, as such *figures of speech* are adapted to give a strong view of what they wish to describe; but if no figure be intended, they are chargeable with real inconsistency, in calling the same thing by different names. If one of the representations be real, and the rest figurative, how are we to distinguish among them, when the writers themselves give us no intimation of any such difference? This circumstance alone seems to prove that they made use of all these representations in the same view, which, therefore, could be no other than as comparisons in certain respects.

Because the word *atonement* frequently occurs in the Old Testament, and in some cases atonements are said to have been made for sin by sacrifices, this whole business has, on this account more particularly, been thought to refer to the death of Christ, as the only atoning sacrifice. But this notion must be given up if we consider the meaning of *atonement* under the Jewish dispensation.

From comparing all the passages in which atonement is mentioned, it is evident that it signifies the making of any thing *clean*, or *holy*, so as to be fit to be used in the service of God, or, when applied to a person, fit to come into the presence of God; God being considered as, in a peculiar manner, the king and sovereign of the Israelitish nation, and as it were, keeping a court among them. Thus atonement was said to be made for the *altar*.—Exod. xxix. 36, and for a *house*, after having been infected with leprosy.—Lev. xiv. 53. Aaron made atonement for the *Levites*, Num. viii. 12, when they were dedicated to their office and ministry, when no sin, or offence, is said to have been done away by it. Atonement was also made at the purification of a leper, Lev. xiv. 18. Burnt offerings that were wholly *voluntary* are said to be accepted to make atonement for the offerer, Lev. i. 4. Atonements were also appointed af-

ter involuntary uncleanness, and sins of ignorance, as well as in some cases of wilful transgression, upon repentance and restitution; but in this case it had no relation to the pardon of sin in the sight of God, but only to the decency and propriety of public worship, for which, a man who had so offended was considered as disqualified. Guilt, in moral sense, is never said to be atoned for by any sacrifice but the contrary is strongly expressed by David and others.

The English word *atonement*, occurs but once in the New Testament, and in other places the same word in the original (*katallagee*) is rendered *reconciliation*; and this word is never used by the Seventy in any passage relating to legal atonements.

Had the death of Christ been the proper atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, and as such, been prefigured by the atonements in the Jewish dispensation, we might have expected not only to have been expressly told so (if not from the first, at least, after the fulfilment of the prophetic type) but also that the time, and other circumstances of the death of Christ, should have corresponded to those of the type of it. Christ being put to death at the feast of the passover might lead us to imagine that his death had some reference to that business; but if he had died as a proper *expiatory sacrifice*, it might have been expected that he would have died on the *day of expiation*, and at the time when the high priest was entering into the holy of holies. Had this been the case, I much doubt whether it would have been in the power of any *reasons*, though ever so solid, to have prevented men from considering the one as the proper type of the other. Now the want of this coincidence should lead our minds off from making such a comparison.

In one passage of the New Testament Christ is said to have died as a *curse* for us. Gal. iii. 13.—*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

Mention is made of several kinds of things *accursed* under the Jewish constitution, but in general they were things devoted to destruction. Christ, therefore, may, in a figurative way of speaking, be considered as a *curse* for us, in consequence of his devoting himself to death for us. But that this can be nothing more than a figure, is evident, because this idea of a curse is inconsistent with that of a sacrifice, and therefore shows that both these representations

are to be considered as mere figures of speech. Though in some of the heathen sacrifices the victim was an animal abhorred by the god to which it was offered, as the goat sacrificed to Bacchus; yet in the Jewish sacrifices the victim was always a clean and useful animal, and perfect in its kind. And nothing *accursed* was ever suffered to be brought to the altar of God. Cities and cattle accursed were in the law devoted to utter destruction. Not one sheep or ox of all the cattle of Jericho, or of the Amalekites, was permitted to be sacrificed.

Christ is also compared to the *paschal lamb* among the Jews. 1 Cor. v. 7.—*Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.* Also, when the legs of Jesus were not broken upon the cross, it is said, John xix. 36.—*These things were done that the scriptures might be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken,* evidently referring to the same words in Ex. xii. 46, which relate to the *paschal lamb*.

There are, moreover, several other circumstances in the evangelical history which lead us to this view of the death of Christ, especially that of his being crucified at the feast of passover, and of his instituting the Lord's supper at that time, and seemingly in resemblance of it, as if it was to be considered in the same light. However, the *paschal lamb* was far from being a proper *sacrifice*. It is never so denominated in the Old Testament, except once, Ex. xii. 27, where it is called *the sacrifice of the Lord's passover*. But this could be only in some secondary or partial sense, and not in the proper and primary sense of the word. For there was no priest employed upon the occasion, no part was burned or offered unto the Lord. And certainly no *propitiation* or *atonement* is said to have been made by it, and therefore it was very far from being a sin offering.

Christ, with respect to his death, is by himself compared to the *serpent* which was exposed by Moses in the wilderness, that those of the people who looked upon it might be cured of the bite of such serpents. Here the analogy is obvious. The distempers of which they were cured were of the body, but those of which we are cured by the gospel are of the mind. John iii. 14.—*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of Man be lifted up.* Ch. xii. 32.—*And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.* In this latter text the allusion is perhaps different from that above mentioned; for here

Christ, being raised above the earth by means of the cross, is represented as drawing men from earth towards heaven.

I shall close this account of the figurative representation of the death of Christ that occur in the New Testament with a view of the principal uses that the sacred writers make of it in illustrating other things. They shew the apostles were glad to take every opportunity of connecting the death of Christ *in a moral view*, as affording strongest motives to a holy life. They also shew a fondness for very strong figures of speech. For the greater part of the metaphors in the following verses are much better, and more far fetched than comparing the death of Christ to a sacrifice. Rom. vi. 3.—*Know ye not, that so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism, unto death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of his Father, even so we also shall walk in newness of life, &c.* Gal. ii. 20.—*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Ch. vi. 14.—*God forbid that I should glory, in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.* See, also, I Cor. ii. 5, 6.

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## SECTION IV.

### VARIOUS KINDS OF PHRASEOLOGY RESPECTING THE DEATH OF CHRIST EXPLAINED.

BESIDES the death of Christ being expressly called a sacrifice, and various sacrificial expressions being applied to it, the language of scripture is thought to favor the doctrine of atonement in various other respects, perfectly corresponding with the idea of its being a proper sacrifice, and reconcilable with other views of it. I shall, therefore, briefly consider every representation which I can find of this nature.

1. Christ is frequently said to have *died for us*. In general, this may be interpreted of his dying *on our*

count, or for our benefit. Or, if, when rigorously interpreted, it should be found that if Christ had not died, we must have died, it is still, however, only *consequentially* so, and by no means properly and *directly* so, as a *substitute* for us. For if, in consequence of Christ not having been sent to instruct and reform the world, mankind had continued unreformed, and the necessary consequence of Christ's coming was his death, by whatever means, and in whatever manner it was brought about, it is plain that there was, in fact, no other alternative, but his death, or ours. How natural, then, was it, especially to writers accustomed to the strong figurative expression of the East, to say that he died *in our stead*, without meaning it in a strict and proper sense, as if God had absolutely required the death of Christ, in order to satisfy his justice for our sins, and as a necessary means of his forgiving us. Nothing but declarations much more definite and express, contained at least in some part of scripture, could authorize us to interpret in this manner such general expressions as the following, John x. 11.—*I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* Ch. xv. 13.—*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* 1 Pet. iii. 18.—*Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* John xi. 50.—*It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*

A shepherd, in risking his life for his sheep, evidently gives his life for theirs, in a sufficiently proper sense; because if he had not thrown himself in the way of the wild beasts that were rushing upon his sheep they must have died. But here was no compact between the beasts and the shepherd; the blood of the sheep was not due to them, nor did they accept of that of the shepherd in its stead. This case is, therefore, no proper parallel to the death of Christ, on the principle of the doctrine of atonement.

2. Christ is said to have given his life as a *ransom* (*lutron*) for us, but it is only in two passages that this view of it occurs, viz: Matt. xx. 28, and Mark x. 45, both of which contain the same expressions, as delivered by our Savior on the same occasion. *The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* 1 Tim. ii. 6.—*Who gave himself a ransom (an-tilutron) for all.* We meet, however, with other expres-

sions similar to these; as Tit. ii. 14.—*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

In all these cases, the price of redemption is said to have been given by Christ, but had we been authorized to interpret these expressions as if we had been doomed to die, and Christ had interposed, and offered his life to the Father in the place of ours, the representation might have been expected to be uniform; whereas, we find, in general, that the price of our redemption is given by God, as John iii. 16.—*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Rom. viii. 32.—*He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

This language on the part of God, or of Christ, is very proper, considered as figurative. For if nothing but the mission of Christ could have saved the world, and his death was the necessary consequence of his undertaking it, God is very properly said to have given him up for us; or, since he undertook the work voluntarily, and from the love that he bore to man, he also may be said to have given his life as a ransom for ours; and thus these texts come under the same general idea with those explained above. In a figurative sense the gospel may be said to be the most *expensive provision* that God has made for recovering men from the power of sin, in order to purchase them, as it were, for himself.

3. Christ is said to *bear the sins of men* in the following texts. Is. liii. 11, 12.—*He shall bear their iniquities. He bare the sin of many.* 1 Pet. ii. 24.—*Who his own self bore our sins, in his own body, on the tree.* Heb. ix. 28.—*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* But the idea we ought to annex to the term *bearing sin*, is that of *bearing it away*, or *removing it*, an effect which is produced by the power of the gospel. These texts are, therefore, similar to 1 John iii. 5.—*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.* The phrase, *bearing sin*, is never applied, under the law, but to the *scape-goat*, on the day of expiation, which was not sacrificed, but as the name expresses, was turned out into the wilderness.

We see clearly in what sense the evangelist Matthew,

understood the passage above quoted from Isaiah; when, speaking of some of our Savior's miraculous cures, he says, ch. viii. 17.—*That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.* Now how did Christ bear the diseases of men? Not by taking them on himself, and becoming diseased as they had been, but by radically curing them. So also Christ *bears*, that is, *bears away* or *removes*, the sins of men, by healing their distempered minds, and restoring them to a sound and virtuous state, by the power of his gospel.

4. Some who are unwilling to give up the idea of Christ dying as a proper sacrifice for us, or in our stead, say nevertheless, that God forgives the sins of men *for the sake of the merits*, or at the *intercession*, of Christ, and that this appears to be analogous to the divine conduct in other respects; as God is often said to show favor to some on the account of others, and especially to have spared the Israelites on account of their relation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and for this reason they say we are required to ask *in the name of Christ*. The texts, however, which bear this aspect, are very few, perhaps none beside the following. 1 John ii. 1.—*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

It is not denied, that it may be consistent with the maxims of divine government, to show favor to some persons on the account of others to whom they bear a near relation. It is a wise maxim in human government, because we are, in many cases, as much concerned for others, as for ourselves; and therefore a favor to a man's children, and posterity, may be the proper reward of his own merit, and also answer other ends of a *reward*, by being a motive to other persons to behave well. But in general, favors distributed in this manner, are such as it is perfectly consistent with divine rectitude to grant to men without any regard to others, as giving the land of Canaan to the posterity of Abraham, &c. When the Jews incurred actual guilt, they were always punished like any other people, and by no means spared on account of their relation to Abraham. On the contrary, they are often said to have been more severely punished for not improving their privileges, as his descendants, &c.

Admitting, however, that God may be represented as



forgiving sin, in particular cases, on this principle; if *al sin* be forgiven for the sake of Christ only, we ought, at least, to have been expressly told so. Our Savior never says that forgiveness of sin was procured by him, but he always speaks of the free mercy of God in the same manner as the prophets who preceded him; and it is particularly remarkable that in his last prayer, which is properly *intercessory*, we find nothing on the subject.

If any stress be laid on Christ being said to be our *advocate*, the Holy Spirit is much more frequently and properly called so; and by our Lord himself; and he is represented by Paul as acting the part of an advocate and intercessor Rom. viii. 26. *The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us*

*Repentance and the remission of sin are said to be preached in the name of Christ.* Luke xxiv. 47, and *through him* Acts xiii. 38. And all who believe in him are said to have remission of sin, *through his name.* Ch. x. 43. But this phraseology is easily explained on the idea that the preaching of the gospel reforms the world, and that the remission of sin is consequent on reformation. In one passage, indeed, according to our translation, God is said to forgive sin *for the sake of Christ.* Eph. iv. 32.—*Be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.* But in the original it is *in Christ*, and may be understood of *the gospel of Christ.* Had sin been forgiven, in a proper and strict sense, for the sake of Christ, the word *freely* would hardly have been used, as it often is, with relation to it, as in Rom. iii. 24. for this implies that forgiveness is the free gift of God, and proceeds from his essential goodness and mercy without regard to any foreign consideration whatever.

The very great variety of manners in which the sacred writers speak of the method in which the pardon of sin is dispensed, is a proof that we are to allow something to the use of figures in their language upon this subject; for some of these phrases must be accommodated to the others. In general, the pardon of sin is represented as the act of God himself, but in some particular cases it is said to be the act of Christ. Matt. ix. 6.—*But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin.* Col. iii. 13.—*Even as Christ hath forgiven you, so also do ye.* But upon a careful examination of such texts as these, and the comparison of them with those in which the pardon of sin

seems to be represented as dispensed in consideration of the *sufferings*, the *merit*, the *resurrection*, the *life*, or the *obedience*, of Christ (for all these views of it occur) we cannot but conclude that they are partial representations, which, at proper distances, are allowed to be inconsistent, without any charge of impropriety; and that according to the plain general tenor of scripture, the pardon of sin, is in reality, always dispensed by the free mercy of God; on account of men's personal virtue, a penitent upright heart, and a reformed exemplary life, without regard to the sufferings, or merit, of any being whatever.

On this subject I would refer my readers to a very valuable essay on the doctrine of atonement in the *Theological Repository*, in which the writer (who is the Rev. Mr Turner of Wakefield) shows that in the Old Testament to make atonement for any *thing* or *person*, signifies, as I have mentioned above, making it, or him, *clean*, or *proper for divine service*; and that in the New Testament, similar expressions, which are there used by way of figure or allusion, relate to the establishment and confirmation of the advantages we at present enjoy by the gospel, and particularly the free and uninterrupted liberty of worshipping God according to the institutions of Christ, granted to us in the gospel; just as the legal atonements served similar purposes under that dispensation. But he says he doth not recollect any texts in which the death of Christ is represented as the *cause*, *reason*, or *motive*, why God has conferred these blessings on man.

The advocates for the doctrine of atonement must be embarrassed, when they consider, that, the godhead of Christ being incapable of suffering, his *manhood* alone was left to endure all the wrath of God that was due for every sin which he forgives; and surely one man (and that which actually suffered of Christ, on their own principles was no more) could never make a sufficient atonement for the sins of the *whole world*, or even of the *elect* only, especially considering, as they do, that the sufferings of Christ were but temporary, and the punishment due to sin eternal.

There is a considerable difference in opinion, also, with respect to the *place*, or *scene* of this expiatory suffering. In general it is thought to have been, in part, at the time of the agony in the garden, and in part on the cross. But to account for this extraordinary suffering, they are obliged

to suppose something uncommon, and undescrivable in it to which nothing in the common feelings of human nature ever corresponded, at the same time, it was only human nature that suffered.

Bishop Burnet was aware of this difficulty, and he expresses his ideas of it in a very natural manner, so as to show clearly how his scheme was pressed with it. In his *Exposition of the 39 Articles*, he says, "It is not easy for us to apprehend in what that agony consisted. For we understand only the agonies of pain, or of conscience which last arise out of the horror of guilt, or the apprehension of the wrath of God. It is, indeed, certain, that he who had no sin could have no such horror in him; and yet it is as certain that he could not be put into such agony only through the apprehension and fear of that violent death which he was to suffer the next day. Therefore we ought to conclude that there was an inward suffering in his mind, as well as an outward visible one in his body. We cannot distinctly apprehend what that was, since he was sure both of his own spotless innocence, and of his Father's unchangeable love to him. We can only imagine a vast sense of the heinousness of sin, and a deep indignation at the dishonor done to God by it, a melting apprehension of the corruption and miseries of mankind by reason of sin, together with the never before felt withdrawing of those consolations that had always filled his soul. But what might be farther in his agony and in his last dereliction we cannot distinctly apprehend. Only this we perceive, that our minds are capable of great pain, as well as our bodies are. Deep horror, with an insupportable sharpness of thought, is a very intolerable thing. Notwithstanding the bodily or substantial indwelling of the fullness of the godhead in him, yet he was capable of feeling vast pain in his body, so that he might become a complete sacrifice, and we might have from his sufferings a very full and amazing apprehension of the guilt of sin. All those emanations of joy with which the indwelling of the eternal word had ever till then filled his soul, might then, when he needed them most, be quite withdrawn and he be left merely to the firmness of his faith, to his patient resignation to the will of his heavenly Father, and to his willing readiness to drink of that cup which his Father had put in his hand to drink."

All this only shows how miserably men may involve themselves in systems unsupported by facts. Our Savior, as an innocent man, could have no terrors of a guilty conscience, and therefore he could feel nothing but the dread of his approaching painful and ignominious death. But having a clearer idea of this, as we perceive in the history, and consequently of the agony of it, than other men generally have of approaching sufferings, the apprehension which he was under, no doubt, affected his mind more than we can well conceive. Those who consider Christ as something more than a man, cannot imagine how he should be so much affected in those circumstances; but there is no difficulty in the case with those who consider him as a being made *exactly like themselves*, and perhaps of a delicate tender habit.

As to the sins of others, it is natural to suppose that his mind would be less at leisure to attend to them than at any other time, his mind being necessarily occupied with the sense of his own suffering; and accordingly we find that all he says upon that occasion respects himself only. *Rather, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* That the presence of God forsok him, whatever he meant by it, is not at all supported by fact; and when he was much oppressed with sorrow, an angel was sent on purpose to comfort and strengthen him.

He went through the scene of his trial and crucifixion with wonderful composure, and without the least appearance of any thing like agony of mind. His saying, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*, was probably nothing more than his reciting the first verse of the 22d Psalm, to which he might wish to direct the attention of those who were present, as it contained many things peculiarly applicable to his case. There is nothing in this scene, any more than in his agony in the garden, but what is easily explicable, on the supposition of Christ being a man; and to suppose that he was then under an agony of mind, impressed upon him, in any inexplicable manner, by the immediate hand of God, in order to aggravate what he would naturally suffer, and thereby make his sufferings an adequate expiation for the sins of the world, is a mere arbitrary supposition, not countenanced by any one circumstance in the narration.

Calvin, as we shall see, supposed the great scene of our Savior's sufferings to have been in *hell*, in the interval between his death and the resurrection. But this is an hypothesis no less arbitrary and unsupported than any other.

Having now seen what the scriptures contain concerning the doctrine of atonement, let us see what christians in after ages have built upon it. The foundation, we shall find, very inadequate to the superstructure.

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## SECTION V.

### OF THE OPINIONS OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

WHEN any mode of speech may be understood either in a *literal* or in a *figurative* sense, there must be some difficulty in ascertaining the real meaning of the person who makes use of it. For it is the same thing as if the word was properly ambiguous. Thus a papist and a protestant equally make use of the words of our Savior, *this is my body*, but it does not therefore follow that they think alike with respect to the Lord's supper. For one of them uses the expression as a mere figure of speech, meaning that the bread and wine are representations, or memorials, of the body and blood of Christ; whereas the other takes them to be the body and blood itself, without any figure.

In like manner, it cannot be determined from the primitive christians calling the death of Christ *a sacrifice for sin*, *a ransom*, &c. or from their saying, in a general way, that Christ died in our stead, and that he *bare our sins*, or even if they carried this figurative language a little farther, that they really held what is now called *the doctrine of atonement*, viz: that it would have been inconsistent with the maxims of God's moral government to pardon any sin whatever, unless Christ had died to make satisfaction to divine justice for it. Because the language above mentioned may be made use of by persons who only believe that the death of Christ was a necessary circumstance in the scheme of the gospel, and that this scheme was necessary to reform the world.

According to the modern system, there is nothing in any of the good works of men that can at all recommend them to the favor of God; that their repentance and reformation is no *reason* or *motive* with him to forgive their sins, and that all the mercy which he ever shows them is on the account of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them. But it will appear that this language was altogether unknown in the early ages of christianity; and accordingly Basnage, ingeniously acknowledges, that the ancients speak *meagrely* (*maigrement*) of the satisfaction of Christ, and give much to good works; a sufficient indication, I should think, that they had no such ideas as he had concerning the satisfaction of Christ, and that they considered the good works of men as *in themselves* acceptable to God; in the same manner as the virtue or merit of Christ was acceptable to him. I shall, however, quote from the early christian writers as much as may enable us to perceive how they thought with respect to this subject.

In the epistle of Clemens Romanus are some expressions which, taken singly, might seem to favor the doctrine of atonement. But the general strain of his writings shows that he had no proper idea of it. Exhorting the Corinthians to repentance, and to virtue in general, he mentions the example of Christ in the following manner. "Let us consider what is good and acceptable, and well pleasing in the sight of him that made us. Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious his blood is in the sight of God, which being shed for our salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world." This seems to be little more than a repetition of what is said in the book of Acts, of Christ being *exalted as a prince and a savior, to give repentance and remission of sins.*

He farther says, "Let us search into all ages that have gone before, and let us learn that the Lord has, in every one of them, still given place for repentance to such as would turn to him." He then mentions the preaching of Noah to the old world, and of Jonah to the Ninevites, of whom he says, "Howbeit they, repenting of their sins, appeased God by their prayer, and were saved though they were strangers to the covenant of God." After this he recites what Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets have said to this purpose; and in all his subsequent exhortations he seems, to have no idea of any thing but repentance and the

mercy of God, and the immediate consequence of it, without the interposition of any thing else. "Wherefore," says he, "let us obey his excellent and glorious will, and imploring his mercy and goodness, let us fall down upon our faces before him, and cast ourselves upon his mercy."

This writer also speaks of virtue alone as having immediately great power with God. "And especially, let them learn how great a power humility has with God, how much a pure and holy charity avails with him, how excellent and great his fear is, and how it will save all such as turn to him with holiness in a pure mind." He speaks of the efficacy of faith in the same language with the apostle Paul. "The Jews," he says, "were all greatly glorified, not for their own sakes, or for their own works, or for righteousness which they themselves had wrought, but through his will" (in consequence of the blessing promised to Abraham). "And we, also, being called by the same will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, either by our own wisdom, or knowledge, or piety, or the works which we have done in the holiness of our hearts, but by that faith by which God almighty has justified all men from the beginning." But by *faith* this writer only means another virtue of the mind, viz: that regard to God, belief in his promises, and submission to his will, which supports the mind of man in great difficulties and trials. This was plainly his idea of the justification of Abraham himself. "For what was our Father Abraham blessed, was it not that through faith he wrought righteousness and truth."

It is possible that persons not acquainted with the writings of the apostolical Fathers would imagine that, when they used such phrases as being *justified by the blood of Christ*, they must mean, as some now do, that without the death of Christ our repentance would have been of no avail; but when we consider all that they have written, and the language of those, who followed them, who treat more fully on the subject, and who appear not to have been sensible that they thought differently from them with respect to it, we shall be satisfied that those phrases conveyed no such ideas to them as they now do to us.

Barnabas, speaking of the Jewish sacrifices, says, "These things, therefore, has God abolished, that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of any such necessity, might have the spiritual offerings of men

"themselves. For so the Lord saith again, to those here-  
 "tofore; Did I at all command your Fathers, when they  
 "came out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings  
 "or sacrifices. But this I commanded them, saying, let  
 "none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neigh-  
 "bor, and love no false oath. For as much then as we are  
 "not without understanding, we ought to apprehend the de-  
 "sign of our merciful Father. For he speaks to us, being  
 "willing that we, who have been in the same error about  
 "the sacrifices, should think and find how to approach un-  
 "to him; and therefore he thus bespeaks us: The sacri-  
 "fice of God is a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite  
 "heart God will not despise." This is not substituting  
 the sacrifice of Christ in the place of the sacrifices under the  
 law, but moral virtue only.

In the *shepherd of Hermas* (if this should be thought to  
 be the work of the Hermas mentioned by Paul) we find  
 nothing of the doctrine of atonement, but strong expressions  
 denoting the acceptableness of repentance and good works  
 only. "Then," says he, "shall their sins be forgiven,  
 "which they have heretofore committed, and the sins of all  
 "the saints, who have sinned even unto this day, if they  
 "will repent with all their hearts, and remove all doubts  
 "out of their heart." He farther says, "Whoever have suf-  
 "fered for the name of the Lord are esteemed honorable  
 "by the Lord, and all their offences are blotted out, be-  
 "cause they have suffered death for the name of the Son  
 "of God."

It seems pretty evident that *so far* we find no real change  
 of opinion with respect to the efficacy of the death of Christ.  
 These writers adopt the language of the apostles, using the  
 term *sacrifice* in a figurative sense, and represent the value  
 of good works, without the least hint or caution, lest we  
 should thereby detract from the merits of Christ, and the  
 doctrine of salvation by his imputed righteousness.



## SECTION VI.

OF THE OPINION OF THE FATHERS TILL AFTER THE TIME OF AUGUSTINE.

THAT it was not the received doctrine of the christian church within this period, that Christ did, in any sense, make the Divine Being placable to men; but the pardon of sin proceeded from the free mercy of God dependently of his sufferings and merit, may, I thus clearly inferred from several considerations.

1. This doctrine, on which so much stress has been by some moderns, is never enumerated as an article of christian faith, in any ancient *summary of christian doctrine* and the early christian writers, especially those who apologised for christianity, had frequent occasion to and we have several summaries of this kind.

To say nothing of the apologies of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, who give accounts of the principal articles of christian faith, but may be thought to do concisely for us to expect that they should take not such a doctrine as this (though the great importance in the opinion of those who hold this doctrine, is sufficient to have given it the preference of any other) not help laying particular stress on the omission of Lactantius, who treats professedly of the system of christianity, as it was generally received in his days. In his *Divine Institutions*, there is so far from being any mention of the necessity of the death of Christ to atone for the sins of men, that he treats of the nature of sin, of the mercy of God, and of the efficacy of repentance, as if he never heard of any such doctrine.

We see his sentiments on these subjects very fully treated in his treatise *De Ira Dei* (concerning the wrath of God). when he professedly considers the reasons of the incarnation and death of Christ, he only says, that, "example necessary to be exhibited to men as well as precept therefore it was necessary that God should be clothed with a mortal body, be tempted, suffer, and die." He gives no other reason whatever. Again, he says, "Christ was made flesh, because he was not only to teach, but also

"and to be an example, that none might alledge in their  
"excuse the weakness of the flesh."

Cyprian, an earlier writer, often mentions the humiliation and sufferings of Christ, but always either as an example, or simply as foretold by the prophets.

Arnobius says, that, "Christ permitted his man, that is, the man to whom he was united to be killed; that, in consequence of it (viz: his resurrection afterwards) it might appear that what they had been taught concerning the safety of their souls was safe, or to be depended upon, and that death was not to be defeated any other way."

Augustine, in several places, speaks of the end of Christ's life and death, but never as designed to make satisfaction for the sins of men, but generally as an example. "In his passion he showed what we ought to endure; in his resurrection, what we are to hope for." Speaking of the incarnation in general, he says, "Christ assumed a human body, and lived among men, that he might set us an example of living, and dying, and rising again." When he speaks figuratively, it is plain he did not carry his ideas so far as the orthodox now do. "In his death," he says, "he made a gainful traffic, he purchased faithful men, and martyrs. He bought us with his blood. He laid down the price of our redemption." But he likewise says, "the martyrs have returned what was laid out for them, that is, have given what was purchased, even their lives."

Some orthodox writers complain of the imperfect knowledge which the primitive christian writers had of the christian system in this respect. Gallæus observes, according to Lardner, that Lactantius said little or nothing of Christ's priestly office. Lardner himself, adds, "I do not remember that Jerome hath any where taken notice of this, but it is likely enough to be true; and that Lactantius did not consider Christ's death in the modern way, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, or satisfaction made to divine justice for the sins of the human race, may be argued from the passages which he quotes from it concerning the value of repentance, and the ends of Christ's death." He adds, that "many other ancient christians will come in for their share in this charge." For according to Flacius Illyrius, "the christian writers who lived soon after Christ and his apostles, discoursed like philosophers, of the law, and its moral precepts, and of the nature of virtue and vice,

“but they were totally ignorant of man’s natural corruption the mysteries of the gospel, and Christ’s benefit. His countryman Jerome,” he says, “was well skilled in the languages, and endeavored to explain the scripture by versions and commentaries; but after all, he was able to do but very little, being ignorant of the human disease and of Christ the physician, and wanting both the key of scripture, and the lamb of God to open to him.”

The same Flacius, or some other learned writer of his time, observes, concerning Eusebius, bishop of Cesarea that “it is a very low and imperfect description which he gives of a christian, making him only a man, who by the knowledge of Christ and his doctrine, is brought to the worship of the one true God, and the practice of sobriety, righteousness, patience, and other virtues. But he hath not a word about regeneration or imputed righteousness.”

I cannot forbear adding what Dr Lardner very pertinently subjoins to this quotation. “Poor ignorant, primitive christians, I wonder how they could find the way to heaven. They lived near the times of Christ and his apostles. They highly valued and diligently read the holy scriptures, and some of them wrote commentaries upon them; but yet, it seems, they knew little or nothing of their religion, though they embraced and professed it with the manifest hazard of all earthly good things; and many of them laid down their lives rather than renounce it. Truly we of these times are very happy in our orthodoxy; but I wish that we did more excel in those virtues which they, and the scriptures likewise, I think, recommend, as the distinguishing properties of a christian. And I am not a little apprehensive, that many things which now make a fair show among us, and in which we mightily pride ourselves, will in the end prove *weeds* only, on which the owner of the ground sets no value.”

2. Some controversies were started in the primitive times which could not have failed to draw forth the sentiments of the orthodox defenders of the faith on this subject, if they had really believed the death of Christ to be a proper sacrifice for sin, and that without it, God either could not, or would not, pardon any sin.

All the Docetæ, and the Gnostics in general, who believed that Christ was man only in appearance, and did not really suffer, could have no idea of the meritorious nature of

his death, as such; and yet this is never objected to any of them by Irenæus, or others, who write the most largely against them.

The Manicheans also did not believe that Christ died, and consequently, as Beausobre, who writes their history, observes, they must necessarily have ascribed the salvation of the soul to the doctrine and the example of Christ; and yet none of the primitive Fathers who write against them observe, that the great end of Christ's coming into the world would then be defeated, in that the sins of men would not be satisfied; for Augustine, who writes against the Manicheans, and from whom, on account of his doctrine of *grace and original sin*, we might expect a complete system of atonement, never objects to them their want of such a doctrine, but combats them on other principles.

3. Had the ancient christian writers had the ideas which some of the moderns have concerning the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, and the insufficiency of good works, they could not have expressed themselves as they generally do, with respect to the value of repentance and *good works* in the sight of God.

Cyprian says, "What sinners ought to do, the divine precepts inform us, viz: that satisfaction is made to God by good works, and that sins are done away by the merit of compassion."

Lactantius says, "Let no one who has been led into sin by the impulse of passion, despair of himself, for he may be restored if he repent of his sins, and by good works make satisfaction to God (*satisfaciat deo*): For if we think our children to be corrected when they repent of their faults, why should we despair of the clemency of God being pacified by repentance (*penitendo posse placari*)."  
Again, "Whoever, therefore, obeys the divine precepts is a worshipper of the true God, whose sacrifices are gentleness of mind, an innocent life and good works."

The manner in which Augustine speaks of the merit of good works, shows that he could not have any proper idea of the satisfaction of Christ. "By these alone," he says, "we secure happiness. In this way we recover ourselves. In this way we come to God, and are reconciled to him, whom we have greatly provoked. When we shall be brought before his presence, let our good works there speak for us, and let them so speak that they may prevail over

“our offences. For which soever is most will prevail, either for punishment, or for mercy.”

4. The merit of *martyrdom* was held in the highest esteem by all the primitive christians. If, therefore, good works in general were thought by them to have merit with God, much more may we expect to find that they had this idea of what they considered as the most heroic act of virtue. And indeed the language of the primitive christians on the subject of martyrdom is exceedingly inconsistent with any notion of atonement for sin by the death of Christ alone, without regard to any thing that man can do for himself.

Ignatius, in a fragment of an epistle preserved by Chrysostom, speaking of certain crimes, says, that they could not be wiped out even by the blood of martyrdom. He also wishes that his own sufferings might be accepted as a *purification*, and *price of redemption* for them (*peripseemakai antipsuchon.*)

Origen says, “Christ has laid down his life for us. Let us also lay down our lives, I will not say for him, but for ourselves, and for those, who may be edified by our martyrdom. And perhaps as we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, Jesus having received a name above every name, so some may be redeemed by the blood of the martyrs.” And yet this writer says, “Christ offered his own life not unlike those, who, of their own accord, devoted themselves to death to deliver their country from some pestilence,” &c. As this language could only be figurative in this writer, we may conclude, that it is no otherwise to be interpreted when we meet with it in other writers of those times.

5. The great virtue which the ancient Fathers ascribed to *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, with respect to the forgiveness of sins, shows plainly, that they did not consider the wrath of God as pacified by the death of Christ once for all. And though the Lord's supper was a commemoration of the death of Christ, it is plain that they did not consider the administration of it merely as an application of his merits or sufferings to themselves; but as having a virtue independent of that, a virtue originating from the time of the celebration. This will be abundantly evident when I come, in the course of this work, to show the abuses of those institutions. However, what they say concerning

baptism will not admit of such an interpretation as some persons, not well acquainted with their writings, might be disposed to put on similar expressions relating to the eucharist.

Among others, Tertullian frequently speaks of baptism as washing away the guilt of sin. In several of the ancient liturgies, particularly that of Chrysostom, the priest prays that the eucharist may serve for the remission of sins and the communication of the Holy Spirit. It is well known, that at length, the church of Rome, in pursuance of the same train of thinking, came to consider the eucharist to be as proper a *sacrifice* as the death of Christ itself, and as having the same original independent virtue.

6. Many of the ancient writers, in imitation of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, call the death of Christ a *sacrifice*, and also say that it was prefigured by the sacrifices under the Law. But that this was no fixed determinate view of the subject with them, is evident from their language upon other occasions; especially when, like the prophets of old, they oppose *good works* and not *the death of Christ*, to the sacrifices under the Law, as being of more value than they were.

Lactantius, in his Epitome of Divine Institutions, speaking of sacrifices, says, "the true sacrifice is that which is brought from the heart," meaning good works. With respect to the same he also says, "These are victims, this is a peculiar sacrifice which a man brings to the altar of God, as a pledge of the disposition of his mind."

Though, therefore, in the Clementine liturgy, contained in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, Christ is called a *high priest* and is said to be himself the *sacrifice*, the *shepherd*, and also the *sheep*, "to appease his God and Father, to reconcile him to the world, and to deliver all men from the impending wrath," we must not infer (notwithstanding in these general terms, this writer seems to express even the proper principle of the doctrine of atonement) that, if he had dwelt longer on the subject, he would have been uniform in his representations. If this *was* the opinion of the author of that liturgy, and those who made use of it, it did not generally prevail. For the principles of that doctrine will very clearly appear to have been altogether unknown to the most eminent writers of that age.

One might have imagined that when Justin Martyr says

that, Christ took (*eileepthen*) the sins of "men," his idea had been that he made himself responsible for them. But the tenor of all his writings shows that he was very far from having any such idea. He will not even admit that, in any proper sense, Christ can be considered as having been made a curse for us. He says, that "when in the Law they are said to be accursed who were crucified, we are not to suppose that the curse of God lies against Christ, by whom he saves those who have done things worthy of a curse." Again he says, "if the Father of all chose that his Christ should receive (*analabesthas*) the curses of all men (that is, be cursed or hated by all men) knowing that he would raise him again after he was crucified and dead; will you consider him who endured these things, according to his Father's will, as accursed?"

Augustine says, "Christ took their punishment but not their guilt." And again, "by taking their punishment and not their guilt, he abolished both the guilt and the punishment." But it is to be considered, as was observed above, that Augustine was certainly ignorant of the principle of the doctrine of atonement; so that we can only suppose him to have meant that Christ suffered upon our account, and for our benefit; and though if he had not suffered, we must, it would have been not *directly*, but by *remote consequence*. His saying that Christ did not take the *guilt* of our sins, shows clearly that he had no idea of his bearing our sins in the common acceptation of the word, so as to make himself answerable for them; and therefore he could not, in a proper sense, be said to take the punishment of them.

7. When the ancient christian writers do speak of the mission and death of Christ, as reversing the effects of sin, and restoring things to the same state in which they were before the fall, so as to make man once more immortal, their idea was not that this was effected by procuring the pardon even of that sin of Adam, by which death was entailed upon his posterity; but by means of Christ doing (which indeed they did not clearly explain) what Adam was not able to do. "For this reason," says Irenæus, "was the word of God made man, and he who was the son of God, became the son of man, that man, being mixed with the word of God, he might, by receiving the adoption, become the son of God. For we could not other-

wise receive immortality, unless we were united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be united to incorruptibility and immortality, unless that which we are had become incorruptible and immortal; that so, what was corruptible, might be absorbed by what was incorruptible, and what was mortal by immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons?"

I am far from pretending to explain, and much less to defend this passage of Irenæus. But it is evident, that it is not capable of receiving any light from the principle of the doctrine of atonement. If this writer had had the same idea that many now have of it, he could not have been so embarrassed on the subject.

The same general object of the death of Christ is expressed by Lactantius, but without annexing to it any particular explanation, in the following passage of his Epitome: "Therefore the supreme Father ordered him to descend upon earth, and put on a human body, that being subject to the passions of the flesh, he might teach virtue and patience, not by words only, but also by actions. Wherefore he was born again of a virgin, without a father, as a man, that, as when he was created by God alone, in his first spiritual nativity, he was made a holy spirit, so being born of his mother alone, in his second carnal nativity, he might become holy flesh; that by his means the flesh which had been subject to sin, might be delivered from death."

Athanasius did plainly consider Christ as dying in the place of men who were subject to death. But he does not say that it was to satisfy the justice of God for their sins, but to procure the resurrection of mankind in general, the wicked as well as the righteous, to a future life; which is by no means the idea of those who now maintain the doctrine of atonement, though it may be said to be an approach towards it.

"It was," says he, "an instance of his love to mankind, that both instead of the death of all men before, the law which related to that mortality, might be disannulled, as having its power entirely satisfied in the Lord's body, and so had no more place against the rest of mankind; and also, that he might recover and revive those men that were returning to corruption from death, by making their bodies his own, and by the grace of the resurrection; and



"so might extinguish the power of death with respect to  
 "them, as stubble is plucked out of the fire. For the word  
 "being conscious that the mortality of all men could not  
 "otherwise be put an end to than by the dying of all men,  
 "and it being impossible that the word, which was immor-  
 "tal, and the Son of the Father, should die; for this cause  
 "he took to himself a body that could die, that the same  
 "body, by partaking of that word, which was over all, might  
 "be an equivalent for the death of all, and yet might after-  
 "wards continue incorruptible, on account of the word that  
 "was the inhabitant, and so corruption might afterwards  
 "cease from all men by the grace of the resurrection." Also in the liturgy ascribed to Nestorius, Christ is said to have "undergone for men the punishment due to their sins, "giving himself to die for all whom death had dominion "over."

It is evident, from all these passages, that these writers had no idea of Christ's so suffering for men, as to endure for them any part of the punishment that was to be inflicted in a future world, but only to procure the reversion of the sentence passed upon men in consequence of the fall of Adam; so far, that, though all men should actually die, they should not continue subject to death, but have the benefit of a resurrection,

8. It appears, that by some means or other, probably the too literal interpretation of the figurative language of scripture, such an advance was made towards the doctrine of atonement, in the period of which I am now treating, that it was generally supposed that the death of Christ was a *price* paid for our redemption from the power of death, and that without it there would have been no resurrection from the dead. But this system was so far from being completed, that these writers could not determine to whom this price was paid; and in general it was agreed that it was paid to the *Devil*, to whom mankind had been given over, in consequence of the sin of Adam,

Origen was clearly of this opinion. "If," says he, "we "are bought with a price, as Paul affirms, we must have "been bought from some person whose slaves we were, "who also demanded what price he pleased, that he might "dismiss from his power those which he held. But it was "the devil that held us. For to him we had been given "over for our sins. Wherefore, he demanded the blood of

“Christ as the price of our redemption.” He goes on to observe, “that till the blood of Christ was given, which was so precious that it alone could suffice for the redemption of all, it was necessary for all those who were under the Law to give each his own blood, in a kind of imitation of a future redemption; and therefore that we, for whom the price of Christ’s blood is paid, have no occasion to offer a price for ourselves, that is *the blood of circumcision.*” In this place, therefore, he supposes that the rite of circumcision, and not the sacrifice of animals, was intended to prefigure the death of Christ, and to serve as a kind of temporary substitute for it.

This writer also compares the death of Christ to that of those in the heathen world who devoted themselves to death, to avert public calamities from their country. “It is requisite, for some secret and incomprehensible reasons in nature, that the voluntary death of a righteous man should disarm the power of evil dæmons, who do mischief by means of plagues, dearths, tempests, &c. Is it not probable, therefore,” he says, “that Christ died to break the power of the great dæmon, the prince of the other dæmons, who has in his power the souls of all the men that ever lived in the world.”

This opinion, however, of the price of our redemption being paid to the devil, appears not to have been universally acquiesced in; and Gr. Nazianzen takes it up as a question that had not been discussed before; and after proposing several schemes, and not appearing to be satisfied with any of them, he gives his own opinion, with considerable diffidence. “We may inquire,” he says, “into a fact, and an opinion, which had been overlooked by many, but which I have diligently considered, viz. to whom, and for what, was the blood of Christ shed. We were in the possession of the devil, being sold to him for sin, we having received the pleasures of sin in return. But if the price of redemption could only be received by him who had possession of us, I ask to whom was this blood paid, and for what cause? For if it was paid to that wicked one, it was shameful indeed; and if he not only received a price from God, but God himself was that price, for such a price it was certainly just that he should spare us. Was the price paid to the Father? But how, for we were not held by him, and how could the Father be delighted

“with the blood of his **only** begotten Son, when he would not receive Isaac who was offered to him by Abraham? Or rather did the Father receive the price, not because he desired, or wanted it, but because it was convenient that man should be sanctified by what was human in God, that he, by conquering the tyrant, might deliver us, and bring us to him.”

The opinion which this writer mentions in the last place, and that to which we may, therefore, suppose he was most inclined, is that the death of Christ is, in some manner, instrumental to our *sanctification*, that is, to our being made fit to be offered to God, and to be made his property, after having been in the power of the devil, but he does not say that it was for our *justification*. He, therefore, had no proper idea of what is now called the doctrine of atonement. Indeed, he expresses himself with so much uncertainty, that some may still think, he was upon the whole, of the opinion of Origen, viz: that the price of our redemption was paid to the devil, but that it was more than he was fairly entitled to.

That the devil was the person to whom the price of our redemption was due, seems to have been the general opinion of speculative writers till the age of the schoolmen. Ambrose says, “we were pledged to a bad creditor, for sin. Christ came, and offered his blood for us.” This writer has a distinction with respect to our redemption by Christ, which is something curious. For he says, “the flesh of Christ was given for the salvation of the body, and his blood for the salvation of the soul.” I do not know that any of the moderns follow him in this. Optatus Milevitanus also speaks of the devil being in possession of men’s souls, before they were redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Augustine writes so fully on this subject, and his opinions in general acquired such an ascendancy in the western church, for many centuries after his death, that I shall give a larger extract from his writings. “What,” says he, “is the power of that blood, in which if we believe we shall be saved, and what is the meaning of being reconciled by the death of his Son? Was God the Father so angry with us, that he could not be pacified without the death of his Son? By the justice of God the race of man was delivered to the devil; the sin of the first man being transferred to all his posterity, the debt of their first parents

"binding them: not that God did it, or ordered it, but he  
 "permitted them to be so delivered. But the goodness of  
 "God did not forsake them, though in the devil's power,  
 "nor even the devil himself, for he lives by him. If, there-  
 "fore, the commission of sin, through the just anger of  
 "God, subjects man to the power of the devil, the remis-  
 "sion of sins, by the gracious forgiveness of God, delivers  
 "man from the devil. But the devil was not to be over-  
 "come by the power, but by the justice of God; and it  
 "pleased God, that in order to deliver man from the power  
 "of the devil, the devil should be overcome not by the pow-  
 "er, but by justice. What then is the justice" (or rather  
 the *righteousness*) "by which the devil was conquered?  
 "what but the righteousness of Jesus Christ? And how  
 "is he conquered? because, though there was in him noth-  
 "ing worthy of death, he (that is the devil) killed him.  
 "Was not then the devil to have been fairly conquered,  
 "though Christ had acted by power, and not by righteous-  
 "ness? But he postponed what he *could* do in order to  
 "do what *ought to be done*. Wherefore it was necessary  
 "for him to be both God and man; man that he might be  
 "capable of being killed; and God to show that it was vol-  
 "untary in him. What could show more power than to  
 "rise again, with the very flesh in which he had been  
 "killed? He, therefore, conquered the devil twice, first  
 "by righteousness, and then by power." He also says,  
 "the blood of Christ is given as a price, and yet the devil  
 "having received it, is not enriched, but bound by it, that  
 "we might be delivered from his bonds."

This last quotation contains an antithesis of which all  
 the writers of that age were too fond, and to which they  
 sometimes sacrificed more than they ought to have done.  
 From the same fondness for antithesis, without perhaps in-  
 tending to be understood in the manner in which his ex-  
 pressions will now be naturally understood by many, he  
 says, "Christ alone suffered punishment without bad de-  
 "serts, that by him we might obtain favor with good de-  
 "serts."

Proclus of Constantinople also, a writer of the same age,  
 but somewhat later than Augustine, considered the price  
 of our redemption as paid to the devil. "The devil," he  
 says, "held us in a state of servitude, boasting that he had  
 "bought us. It was necessary, therefore, that all being

“condemned, either they should be dragged to death, or a sufficient price be paid; and because no angel had wherewithal to pay it, it remained that God should die for us.”

9. Lastly, nothing, perhaps, can show more clearly how far the primitive christians were from entertaining the idea that many now do concerning the efficacy of the death of Christ, as instrumental to the pardon of all sin, than their interpretation of some of those texts in which the doctrine of atonement is now supposed to be contained.

Clemens Alexandrinus explains Rom. iv. 25, *he was delivered for our offences*, by saying that Christ was the corrector and director of sinners, so that he alone can forgive sins, being appointed a pedagogue by the universal Father. He explains Matt. xxvi. 28, in which our Lord calls the wine *his blood which he shed for many*, “by his words or doctrine, which was poured out for many, *for the remission of sins*,” and he interprets what our Lord says in the 6th chapter of John’s gospel, about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, of faith and hope, which supports the soul, and to prove that blood may represent word or doctrine, he alledges, Gen. iv. 10, in which it is said, the blood of Abel cried unto God.

Upon the whole, I think it must appear sufficiently evident, that the proper doctrine of atonement was far from being settled in the third or fourth centuries, though some little approach was made towards it, in consequence of supposing that what is called a *ransom* in a figurative sense, in the New Testament, was something more than a figure; and therefore that the death of Christ was truly a *price paid for our redemption*, not indeed directly from *sin*, but rather from *death*, though it was not settled *to whom* this price was paid. In general the writers of those times rather seem to have considered God as the person who paid the price, than he that received it. For, man being delivered into the power of the devil, they considered the price of redemption as paid to him. As to the forgiveness of sins, it was represented by all the Fathers, and even by Augustine himself, as proceeding from the free grace of God, from which free grace he was farther induced to give up his Son, as the price of our redemption from the power of the devil. We must, therefore, proceed farther, before we

come to any regular system of atonement, founded on fixed principles, such as are now alledged in support of it.

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## SECTION VII.

OF THE STATE OF OPINIONS CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT, FROM THE TIME OF AUGUSTINE TO THE REFORMATION.

AFTER Augustine we find but few writers of eminence for several centuries, owing to the great confusion of the times; so that he being the last very considerable writer in the western church, his works went down to posterity with peculiar advantage, having no rival of any note. He was, therefore, considered as an authority, and his opinions were seldom disputed. But having himself formed no fixed opinion with respect to the doctrine of atonement, his doctrines of *grace*, *original sin*, and *predestination*, were not connected with it, as they now are. We shall find, however, that though not immediately, yet by degrees, something more like the present doctrine of atonement got established before the era of the reformation.

About two centuries and a half after Augustine, we find Gregory the Great, who was the most considerable writer in his time. But he also was far from having any consistent notions on this subject. For at the same time that he insists upon the necessity of some expiation, he says, that our redemption might have been effected by Christ in some other way than by his death. He says, "The rust of sin could not be purged without the fire of torment; Christ therefore came without fault, that he might subject himself to voluntary torment, and that he might bear the punishment due to our sins." But he says, "Christ might have assisted us without suffering, for that he who made us could deliver us from suffering without his own death. But he chose this method, because by it he showed more love to us."

In Theodorus Abucara, a Greek writer of the ninth century, we find something more like the doctrine of atonement,

than in any writer in the Latin church. Indeed, as far as the extract given us by Grotius goes, it is very express to the purpose. But how he would have explained himself if he had written more largely on the subject, I cannot tell. He says, "God by his judgments demanded of us all things that are written in the law; which when we could not pay, the Lord paid for us, taking upon himself the curse and condemnation to which we were obnoxious." Again, he says, "Christ, the mediator, reconciled us to God."

In the Latin church, however, the doctrine of atonement does not appear to have been fixed in the eleventh century; at least if we may judge of it by the writings of Anselm, who was one of the greatest theologians of that age, and one of the first who distinguished himself by that peculiar kind of acuteness of speculation, which was carried much farther some time afterwards, in what is called the age of the *schoolmen*. This, however, we may say, that all the ideas of Anselm on this subject, would not be adopted by those who are advocates for the doctrine of atonement at present. He says, "that of innumerable other methods, by which God, being omnipotent, might have saved men, he chose the death of Christ, that by it, he might, at the same time, manifest his love to men." "Was the Father," says he, "so angry with men, that unless the Son had died for us he would not be appeased? No: For the Father had love for us even when we were in our sins." Yet he says, "Human nature could not be restored unless man paid what for sin he owed to God, and that which Christ ought not to pay but as man, he was not able to pay but as God; so that here was a necessity that God should be united to man."

This seems, indeed, to be the proper language of the doctrine of atonement. But he afterwards expresses himself in a manner not quite so favorable to that scheme, for he says, "As Christ died without any sin of his own, a reward was due to him; and because he, being God, could not receive any additional happiness, the reward was bestowed on those on whom he chose that it should be conferred and on whom could he more justly choose to have it bestowed, than upon his relations and brethren whom he saw in so miserable a state; that that might be remitted to them which they owed for their sins, and that might

"be given to them, which on account of their sins they wanted."

Something more like the doctrine of atonement occurs in Theophilus, a Greek writer of the age of Anselm. But the quotation from him in Grotius, is so short, that, as in the case of Abucara, I cannot tell how he would have explained himself if he had written more largely upon the subject. It may be observed, however, that as Grotius was professedly collecting authorities in support of the doctrine of atonement, he would not have omitted any thing that he had found more to his purpose. "The Father," says this writer, "was angry, wherefore Christ being made a mediator reconciled him to us. How? By bearing what we ought to have borne, viz: death." By this, however, he might not mean the *wrath of God in a future state*, but simply *death*, respecting the whole human race, which we have seen to be the opinion of the primitive Fathers. And this, indeed, might be all that Abucara intended to express in the passage above quoted.

In the following century we meet with Peter Lombard, the greatest authority in the school of theology before the appearance of Thomas Aquinas; but in him we find nothing more settled about the doctrine of atonement than in the time of Augustine. This writer, in his book of *Sentences*, in which he meant to comprise the sum of universal theology, treating of the manner in which we are delivered from sin and the devil by the death of Christ, says, "that in the death of Christ the love of God toward us is made conspicuous, and by means of it we are moved and excited to love God, who hath done so much for us, and thus we become justified, that is, being free from sin, we become righteous. The death of Christ, therefore, justifies us, because by means of it love is excited in our hearts."

He adds, but more obscurely, that, "in another manner also, we are justified by the death of Christ, viz: because by faith in it we are freed from sin, looking to it as the children of Israel looked to the brazen serpent; so that though after the death of Christ the devil may tempt us, as he did before, he cannot conquer us as he did before. Thus Peter was overcome by temptation before the death of his master, but afterwards behaved with the greatest boldness before the Jewish rulers." Again, treating of the manner in which we are delivered from punishment by



the death of Christ, he says, that "the penance enjoined by the church would not suffice without the sufferings of Christ, co-operating with it; so that the sins of good men before the death of Christ were borne with by God until that event." He says, however, "we are not to suppose that the death of Christ so reconciles us to God, as that he then begins to love those whom he before had hated; for, that God always loved men, and that he might have chosen any other method to redeem us from sin than by the death of Christ, if he had pleased; but that he chose this method because in this manner the devil is overcome not by *power*, of which he was a lover, but by *righteousness*, which he hated. For we being the captives of the devil, God might have released us by his authority only." This is the same view of this subject that was before given by Augustine.

In this last quotation from Peter Lombard, we find some remains of the old doctrine of redemption from the power of the devil; but in Bernard, who was his cotemporary, we find more of the proper doctrine of satisfaction, but not very fully stated, and mixed, with some principles not very consonant to it. Upon the whole, however, his doctrine on this subject is nearer to that of the moderns than any thing we meet with before the reformation. He also speaks of *imputed sin*, and *imputed righteousness*, more expressly, I believe, than any who had gone before him. He says, that, "since man, by sin, became obnoxious to two kinds of death, the one spiritual and voluntary, the other corporeal and necessary, God by his corporeal and voluntary death obviated both. Had he not suffered corporeally, he had not paid our debts; had he not suffered voluntarily, there would not have been any merit in it." "God-man," says he, "taking the punishment, and being free from the guilt, dying of his own accord, merits life and righteousness for us." "Death," he says, "is driven away by the death of Christ, and his righteousness is imputed to us. Shall the sin of Adam be imputed to me? And shall not the righteousness of Christ belong to me also? We are much more truly born of God according to the spirit, than we are born of Adam according to the flesh. A foreign righteousness," says he, "is given to man who wanted his own. It was man that owed, and it was man that paid. The satisfaction of one is imputed to all." But in all this

speaking of *natural death* only, and therefore he did not fact go beyond the ideas of Augustine.

Notwithstanding this language, so exceedingly favorable to the doctrine of atonement, he speaks of the power that every person has, to forgive sins committed against himself. "Can I," says he, "forgive an offence against myself? The Omnipotent certainly can. We know, therefore, that Christ can forgive sin by the power of his divinity, and we cannot doubt of his willingness."

The great oracle of the Latin church was Thomas Aquinas, and his doctrine, we may presume, was that which was most generally received in that church, and retained at the time of the reformation. The following quotations from his *Summa*, shew, that his doctrine of satisfaction was the received one. He says, that, "in consequence of sin man becomes a debtor to God as a judge, and to the devil as a tortor. And with respect to God, justice required that he should be redeemed, but not with respect to the devil, so that Christ paid his blood to God, and not to the devil. It was not naturally impossible for God," he says, "to reconcile to man without the death of Christ, but it was more convenient, as by this means he obtained more and better gifts than by the mere will of God." He says that "God might have remitted the sins of men by mere will, but that it is more convenient to do it by the death of Christ, on account of the various uses which are answered at the same time, especially moral ones; and among others he mentions our being thereby the more inclined to love God, and that Christ thereby gave an example of obedience, humility and fortitude." He says, that "guilt of sin is taken away by the renovating power of the blood of Christ, and the punishment of Christ, as a man making satisfaction to God." He illustrates the merits of Christ with respect to christians, by the idea of his being the head, and they the body, as if, says he, a man by means of his hands, should redeem himself from a punishment due for a crime committed by his feet. Lastly, he maintained that baptism, and the other sacraments, derived their virtue from the death of Christ.

It appears from these extracts, that the Latin church was not without any consistent doctrine of atonement, though that atonement was ascribed to the death of Christ. We shall in another part of this work, that though the writers

of this age admitted the doctrine of Augustine concerning *grace*, they were not without expedients to make room for the doctrine of the *merit* of good works, and even to provide a *fund of merit*, transferable to those who had it not, of which the court of Rome made a most intemperate use. This doctrine of *merit*, would naturally check the tendency which the divines of that church might otherwise have had, to perfect the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ; and it was in opposition to this doctrine of human merit; that Luther, and some others of the reformers, laid the great stress which we find they did upon the doctrine of the merit of Christ, and the satisfaction made for our sins by his death. With them, therefore, and with them only, shall we find the doctrine of atonement completed in all its parts. How this business stood in the Greek church, I have had no opportunity of tracing; but from the few specimens I have given of it, it should seem, that their opinions were nearer to those of our reformers than those of the church of Rome.

It is very remarkable, that we find nothing like a *controversy* on the subject of this doctrine in all the western church, quite down to the reformation; nor do we find any thing of this kind in the Greek church, except, that in the twelfth century, the emperor Emanuel Comnenus exercised himself and his divines with this question, "in what sense it might be affirmed that an incarnate God was at the same time the offerer and the oblation?" But nothing of any consequence resulted from it.

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## SECTION VIII.

### OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE REFORMERS ON THE SUBJECT OF ATONEMENT.

THE first who separated from the church of Rome were the *Waldenses*, of Piedmont, in the Alps. They seem to have had their origin from the time of Claudius, bishop of Turin, who distinguished himself by his opposition to the worship of images, and other innovations of the church of Rome, in the tenth century. With them we find a gener-

outline of the doctrine of atonement in the confession of faith, which they presented to the king of France in 1544; in which they say, that, "the Fathers, to whom Christ was promised, notwithstanding their sin, and their impotence by the law, desired the coming of Christ to satisfy for their sins, and to fulfil the law by itself." But we find nothing of this subject in their older confessions. In general, however, it cannot but appear probable, that as the advocates of the church of Rome were inclined to explain away the doctrine of *grace*, and to introduce that of *merit*, those who wished for a reformation of the abuses of penance, purgatory, and indulgences, which were founded on the doctrine of *merit*, would lean to the other extreme, and lay great stress on the satisfaction made for sin by the death of Christ alone.

Wickliffe seems to have been a firm believer of the doctrine of predestination, and also of the absolute necessity of the death of Christ, in order to the forgiveness of sin, if his sentiments be faithfully represented by Dupin, who censures him for maintaining that God could not pardon sin without the satisfaction of Jesus Christ; that he can save none but those who are actually saved; and that he wills sin in order to bring good out of it. And Mr Gilpin represents him as maintaining that "all men, as far as the merit of another can avail, are partakers of the merits of Christ." This, however, is not very consistent with the doctrine of predestination.

But after the reformation by Luther, we find the doctrine of satisfaction, or atonement for sin by the death of Christ, reduced to a regular system, grounded on certain principles, and pursued to its proper extent. It cannot be said of the divines since that period, as it may perhaps be said of some before it, that what we meet with in them on this subject were only casual expressions, or hasty and unsettled thoughts, and that if they had written more fully and expressly upon the subject, they might, perhaps, have advanced what would have been inconsistent with it. There can be no doubt but that the principles of this doctrine were the real persuasion of many of the first reformers, that they considered it as an article of the utmost consequence, and that even the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was only a secondary consideration with respect to it. Since the reason of the incarnation of Christ, they say, was the giving

merit to his sufferings and death, and to enable him to make an infinite satisfaction for sin, which was of infinite magnitude, and required nothing less to expiate it at the hands of a righteous and just God.

That the first reformers should so eagerly catch at this doctrine, and lay the stress they did upon it, may be accounted for upon two considerations. The first is, that the controversy began on the subject of *indulgences*, which were built on the doctrine of *merit*, and this was most effectually opposed by disclaiming merit altogether, undervaluing all good works, and building all hopes of future happiness on the perfect satisfaction that Christ has made to the justice of God for us, and his righteousness imputed to us.

Another circumstance which contributed to give them this turn, was that Luther had been a friar of the order which bore the name of Augustine. He was much conversant in his writings, and therefore would have a leaning not only to his doctrines of grace, original sin, and predestination, but also to this of satisfaction, which, though it was not properly advanced by Augustine himself, had been gradually established on his general principles.

The doctrine of Luther and his followers on this subject, we see in the confession of faith, presented to the emperor Charles V. at Augsburg, in 1530, where we find it asserted, that "Christ died to reconcile the Father to us, and that he might be a true sacrifice for the guilt not only of original sin, but also for all the actual sins of men."

This doctrine is more fully expressed in the Helvetic confession of the year 1536, and which was approved by all the protestant churches in Europe at that time. It is there declared, that "Christ took upon him, and bore the sins of the world, and satisfied divine justice. God, therefore, on account of the passion and resurrection of Christ only, is propitious to our sins, nor does he impute them to us, but he imputes the righteousness of Christ for ours; so that we are not only cleansed from our sins, but also presented with the righteousness of Christ, and being absolved from sin, we become righteous, and heirs of eternal life. Therefore, properly speaking, God alone justifies us, and only for the sake of Christ, not imputing to us our sins, but imputing to us his righteousness."

But the proper principle of this doctrine, as providing an

infinite satisfaction for offences of infinite magnitude, is most fully expressed in the synod of Dort, held in 1618. "God," say they, "is not only supremely merciful, but supremely just. But his justice requires that our sins, being committed against his infinite majesty, must be punished not only with temporal, but with eternal pains, both of body and mind; which pains we cannot escape till the justice of God be satisfied. But when we could not make satisfaction, God gave his only begotten Son to satisfy for us; and he was made sin and a curse upon the cross in our stead."

Notwithstanding the satisfaction, thus supposed to be made to the justice of God, by the sufferings of Christ, it is evident that there must be some method of *appropriating* the benefit of these sufferings to individuals; for otherwise all mankind would have an equal claim to it. And since it would favor the doctrine of human merit too much, to suppose that the merit of Christ's suffering was always applied to persons of a certain character and conduct, advantage was taken of an expression of the apostle Paul, that we are *saved by faith alone*; interpreting it, as if it were something altogether independent of *good works*, or even of a good disposition of mind, which always precedes good works; and constitutes whatever merit they have. This application of the merits of Christ was, therefore, said to be made by something to which they gave the name of *faith*, but at the same time they disclaimed its being either of the nature of a *work*, or of *faith* in the usual sense of the word, viz. the *belief of a truth*. They therefore contented themselves with defining it by its *effects*; and this has been done, as might be supposed, very differently, and generally in figurative language, which conveys no determinate ideas, and therefore leaves the mind in great uncertainty, whether it be possessed of it or not.

In the Saxon confession, faith is defined to be "not the knowledge of any historical fact, but the embracing of all the articles of faith, and especially this, *I believe the remission of sins*, not to others only but to myself also." It is also there called, "an acquiescing confidence in the mediator." In the synod of Dort, it is called, an instrument by which we lay hold of "the righteousness of Christ;" and it is always supposed to be something that is imparted by God, and nothing which can be acquired by man him-

self. So also that *repentance* on which salvation is based, is said, in the Augustan confession, to be "the gift of God, and to be given not on account of any that we have done, or may do."

It is evident, that the more careful divines have but explain *faith*, as something that is neither of the nature of a *work*, nor yet the proper *belief* of any thing, the more explicable and uncertain they have left it. In consequence of this, persons of a warm imagination more readily than that they have experienced this kind of *inward operation* or *feeling*; while persons of more sober minds have great doubts and distress on this account. This *act of faith* as it is sometimes called, is also represented either as an *accident*, or the same thing with the *new birth*, without which no man can be called a child of God, or an heir of eternal life. But when the phraseology of scripture, and the reason of the thing, are considered, we cannot but be satisfied that *faith* is the belief of the gospel, or of those historical facts which are contained in the writings of the evangelists, and that the *new birth* is that change of character and conduct which is produced by that belief.

This improved doctrine of satisfaction being held by the reformers in opposition to the popish doctrine of merit, did not a little embarrass the divines of the church of Rome, among whom that doctrine had never been brought to any certain standard, so that there has always been room for a great diversity of opinion on the subject.

In the debate about *imputed righteousness* in the council of Trent, it was agreed by all the divines, that Jesus had merited for us, and that his merit is imputed to us. Dominicus a Soto maintained that the term ought to be exploded, because neither the Fathers nor the scripture used it, and especially because the Lutherans had rejected it, affirming that imputed righteousness is the sole occasion of man. He added, that it cut off all the merit of satisfaction, and equalled the meanest of all saints and the blessed virgin.

At length the council condemned certain assertions of Luther, especially that God converts those whom he calls even though they resist; and some in the writings of Luther, viz. that in predestination and reprobation, merit has no power but only the will and pleasure of God; that the justified cannot fall from grace, &c. After much de-

on the subject, the decrees of this council were so framed, that it was hoped they might have satisfied all parties. But in consequence of this, there was so much ambiguity in them, that they decided nothing; and the controversy among the catholics themselves went on just as before; persons of the most opposite sentiments appealing to the same decrees of this council.

Among other things it was determined by them, that the grace by which men are justified is merited by Christ. And upon the whole it is evident, that their decrees are in favor of that set of opinions which is termed *orthodox*, in all the established churches among the reformed.

We are not to conclude that because this doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ was held up by almost all the reformers, as an article of so great magnitude and importance, that therefore it was soon so reduced to a system, as that there was no diversity of opinion about it. Nay it appears that some very essential points belonging to it were then, and indeed still are, undetermined; and they are things of such a nature, as, in fact, leave great doubts with respect to the very foundation of the doctrine itself.

Calvin makes it essential to the satisfaction of Christ, that his death should be both voluntary (which indeed others had said before him) and also that he should be condemned in a court of justice. "Had Christ been killed," said he, "by robbers, or in a sedition, his death would have been no kind of satisfaction; but by being condemned before a judge, it is plain that he assumed the character of a guilty person." I should imagine, however, that many very orthodox persons of this day would think, that there might have been the same merit in the death of Christ, with respect to his making satisfaction for the sins of men, if the malice of his enemies had brought him to any kind of violent death, though there had been no sentence of an iniquitous court of justice for the purpose.

It is now generally thought that the scene of Christ's meritorious sufferings, when he actually bore the sin of men, and suffered the punishment due to them, was either in his agony in the garden, or in his death upon the cross; but Calvin says, "nothing would have been done by the mere death of Christ, if he had not also afterwards descended into Hell, where he sustained that death which



“is inflicted by an angry God on the wicked.” To this he applies what the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says of Christ’s *praying with strong cries and tears*, which he says was lest he should be swallowed up by the wrath of God as a sinner. In another place, however, he says that in general Christ takes our sins, and purchases righteousness for us by the whole course of his obedience. But this is a thing about which those who now believe the doctrine of atonement are not agreed.

It is evident, however, that Calvin believed the real descent of Christ into hell, not for the sake of *preaching to the spirits in prison*, or, as the primitive Fathers understood it, to those who died under the old dispensation, but that he might there suffer the proper torments of the damned, and bear the wrath of God that had been merited by the sins of men. Yet he says, that “God was not really angry with Christ, though he made him bear all the effects of his anger.” He would certainly, however, have been the proper object of God’s anger if, as he maintains, “the stain (that is the guilt) as well as the punishment of sin, was laid upon him, so that it ceased to be imputed to men.” If God was neither displeased with men because their guilt was transferred to Christ, nor with Christ to whom it was transferred, what was the object of his anger, and how was his justice really satisfied?

A more difficult question, and to which it is impossible that any satisfactory answer, should be given, is how the sufferings of Christ can be deemed *infinite*, so as to make atonement for sins of infinite magnitude, when the divine nature of Christ, to which alone infinity belongs, is impassible, and his human nature could bear no more than that of any other man? It must be exceedingly difficult to conceive how any supposed *union* of the two natures can be of any avail in this case, unless, in consequence of that union, the divine nature had borne some share of the sufferings, which the scheme requires to be infinite, and this idea is justly disclaimed as impious. Osiander, the Lutheran, maintained that Christ, as man, was obliged to obey the law of God himself, and therefore that he made expiation for sin, as God; but Stancarus, another Lutheran divine, in opposition to him, maintained that the office of mediator belonged to Christ as man only. Both these opinions Mosheim says are dangerous. This is not the only case in which we see

men bewildering themselves, and puzzling others, by departing from the plain path of truth and common sense.

Such, however, is the constitution of things, that we are not authorized to expect any great good, without a proportionable mixture of evil. The case of Luther, and of Calvin too, was such, that the reformation of the errors and abuses of popery could not have been expected of them, or of their followers, but on principles equally erroneous. Happily, however, other persons, unconnected with them, were able, even at that time, to hit the happy medium between the popish doctrine of *merit*, as a foundation for the abuses of penance, indulgences, &c. and that of the total *insignificance of good works* to procure the favor of God. If by our good works we can procure the favor of God to ourselves, which is the uniform language of the scripture, and yet no portion of one person's merit be considered as capable of being transferred to another (which, indeed, is in the nature of things impossible) the very foundation of the popish doctrine of *supererogation*, and consequently of *indulgences*, is overturned; and yet no one false or dangerous principle is introduced in its place.

Faustus Socinus, who distinguished himself so much in recovering the original doctrine of the proper *humanity of Christ*, as to give occasion to all who now hold that doctrine to be called by his name, saw clearly the absurdity of what was advanced by the other reformers concerning satisfaction being made to the justice of God by the death of Christ. Indeed, it immediately follows from his principles, that Christ being only a man, though ever so innocent, his death could not, in any proper sense of the word, atone for the sins of other men. He was, however, far from abandoning the doctrine of *redemption* in the scripture sense of the word, that is, of our deliverance from the guilt of sin by his gospel, as promoting repentance and reformation, and from the punishment due to sin, by his power of giving eternal life to all who obey him. But, indeed, if God himself freely forgives the sins of men upon their repentance, there could be no occasion, properly speaking, for any thing farther being done to avert the punishment with which they had been threatened. What he says on the subject is as follows:

“We are saved, however, from the punishment of our sins by Christ, because by his great power in heaven and

“earth, he brings it about, that no punishment can reach us; and by the same power he will accomplish our entire and perpetual freedom from death, which is the wages of sin, and its principal and peculiar punishment. But this method of rescuing us from the punishment of our sins is very different from that which implies a satisfaction for them. — Nothing can be more repugnant to each other than the freedom of pardon and satisfaction. Indeed, no man of judgment and piety ought to entertain the idea of satisfaction for sin; since it plainly does very much derogate from the power and authority, or the goodness and mercy of God.”

He farther observes, that though John the baptist when he ascribes to Christ the *taking away of sin*, calls him a *lamb*, and that mode of expression alluded to the expiatory sacrifices in the Law, yet he apprehends that in this the baptist alluded to his *whole character*, as in several methods Christ takes away the sins of the world. In support of this he alledges, that in the expiatory sacrifices of the Law, those which were expressly offered for sin, no *lamb* was sacrificed.

Grotius, having written a treatise in defence of the doctrine of satisfaction, against Socinus, gave occasion to a most excellent answer by Crellius, in defence of the Socinian doctrine on this subject; and to this, Grotius did not think proper to make any reply.

In England, this doctrine of atonement seems to have got as firm possession of the minds of men, as that of the divinity of Christ. It is the doctrine of the established churches of England and Scotland, and is retained, at least in some qualified sense, even by many who do not hold the divinity of Christ, at least those who are styled Arians. For, that a Socinian should hold this doctrine, in any sense, is hardly possible. We are not, however, to expect a sudden and effectual reformation in this or in any other capital article of the corruption of christianity.

To establish this article, was a work as we have seen, of long time, and therefore we must be content if the overthrow of it be gradual also. Great buildings do not often fall at once, but some apartments will still be thought habitable, after the rest are seen to be in ruins. It is the same with great *systems of doctrine*, the parts of which have long gone together. The force of evidence obliges us at first to

abandon some *one* part of them only, and we do not immediately see that, in consequence of this we ought to abandon others, and at length the *whole*. And indeed, could this have been seen from the beginning, it would have been with much more difficulty that we should have been prevailed upon to abandon any part. The very proposal might have staggered us; and any doubt with respect to the whole, might have been followed by universal scepticism. It hath pleased divine providence, therefore, to open the minds of men by easy degrees, and the detection of one falsehood prepares us for the detection of another, till, before we are aware of it, we find no trace left of the immense, and seemingly well compacted system. Thus by degrees we can reconcile ourselves to abandon all the parts, when we could never have thought of giving up the whole.

There are many who can by no means think that God has, in a proper sense, accepted of the death of Christ in lieu of that of all men (having no idea of the possibility of *transferring guilt*, and consequently of transferring punishment) who yet think that the death of Christ serves to show the divine displeasure at sin, in such a manner, as that it would not have been expedient to pardon any sin without it; and they think that the sacrifices under the Law had a real reference to the death of Christ in the scheme of the gospel; while others think the death of Christ was necessary to the pardon of sin, and our restoration to eternal life, in some method of which we have no clear knowledge, being only obscurely intimated in the scriptures, and therefore could not be intended to produce its effect by any operation on our minds.

In time, however, I make no doubt, but that an attention to what seems now to be ascertained with respect to the moral character and government of God, viz. that he is a being purely *good*, that in him, justice, is only a modification of benevolence, that he simply wishes the happiness of all his creatures, and that virtue is a necessary means of that happiness; that he is incapable of introducing any *unnecessary evil*, and that his displeasure at sin is sufficiently shown by the methods which he takes to promote the reformation of sinners, and by the punishment of those who continue unreformed: these, I say, together with other considerations, suggested in the argumentative part of this division of my work, will in time eradicate whatever yet re-

mains of the doctrine of atonement; a doctrine which has no foundation in reason, or in the scriptures, and is indeed a modern thing.

In fact, the only hold it has on the minds of many protestants, is by means of such a literal interpretation of single texts of scripture, as gives the doctrine of transubstantiation a like hold on the minds of papists. Besides, it must, I am persuaded, lead many persons to think rationally on this subject, and especially to abandon all *middle opinions* with respect to it, to observe, as they must do if they give due attention to the language of scripture, that those particular texts on which they are disposed to lay so much stress, give no countenance to any middle doctrine. For they must either be interpreted literally, according to the plain and obvious sense of the words, which will enforce the belief of proper vicarious punishments, or they must be interpreted *figuratively*; and then they will not oblige us to believe the doctrine of atonement in *any* sense, or that Christ died a sacrifice in *any* other manner, than as any person might be said to be a sacrifice to the cause in which he dies.

It is now, certainly, time to lay less stress on the interpretation of particular texts, and to allow more weight to general considerations, derived from the whole tenor of scripture, and the dictates of reason; and if there should be found any difficulty in accommodating the one to the other (and I think there is even less of this than might have been expected) the former, and not the latter, should remain unaccounted for. Time may clear up obscurities in particular texts, by discovering various readings, by the clearer knowledge of ancient customs and opinions, &c. But arguments drawn from such considerations as those of the moral government of God, the nature of things, and the general plan of revelation, will not be put off to a future time. The whole compass and force of them is within our present reach, and if the mind be unbiassed, they must, I think, determine our assent.

It is certainly a great satisfaction to entertain such an idea of the author of the universe, and of his moral government, as is consonant to the dictates of reason and the tenor of revelation in general, and also to leave as little obscurity in the principles of it as is possible; that the articles of our creed on this great subject may be few, clear, and

simple. Now it is certainly the doctrine of reason, as well as of the Old Testament, that God is merciful to the penitent, and that nothing is requisite to make men, in all situations, the objects of his favor, but such moral conduct as he has made them capable of. This is a simple and a pleasing view of God and his moral government, and the consideration of it cannot but have the best effect on the temper of our minds and conduct in life. The general tenor of the New Testament is likewise plainly agreeable to this view of things, and none of the *facts* recorded in it require to be illustrated by any other principles. In this, then, let us acquiesce, not doubting but that, though perhaps not at present, we shall in time be able, without any effort or straining, to explain all particular expressions in the apostolical epistles, &c. in a manner perfectly consistent with the general strain of their own writings, and the rest of the scriptures.\*

\* Appendix H.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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PART III.

THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING GRACE, ORIGINAL SIN,  
AND PREDESTINATION.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

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NEXT to the opinions concerning the *person of Christ*, none have agitated the minds of men more, or produced more serious consequences, than those relating to the doctrines of *grace*, *original sin*, and *predestination*, which have so many connections, that I think it proper to treat of them all together.

That it must be naturally in the power of man to do the will of God must be taken for granted, if we suppose the moral government of God to be at all an equitable one. He that made man, certainly knew what he was capable of, and would never command him to do what he had not enabled him to perform; so as to propose to him a *reward* which he knew he could never attain, and a punishment which he knew he had no power of avoiding. If it be worth our while to inquire at all into the government under which we live, we must begin with assuming these first principles. For, otherwise, we have nothing to do but to await whatever he who made us hath pleased to determine concerning us, nothing that we can do in the case being able to alter it.

Supposing, therefore, that God did not mean to tantalize *his creatures*, in the most cruel and insulting manner, every

moral precept in the scriptures is a proof that man has naturally a power of obeying it, and of insuring the reward annexed to the observance of it. Now moral precepts, with express sanctions of rewards and punishments, abound in the scriptures; and men are even expostulated with, in the most earnest manner, and persuaded to the practice of their duty, by the most solemn assurances, that *God is not willing that any should perish*, and by repeated warnings, that their destruction will lie at their own door; the general tenor of the preaching of the old prophets being, *turn ye, turn ye, from your evil way, why will ye die, O ye house of Israel*. Also, every thing that is of a moral nature in the New Testament is uniformly delivered in the same strain.

Notwithstanding this, it hath been imagined that all these representations are to be accommodated to a system, according to which, the whole race of mankind received so great an injury by the fall of Adam, that from that time none of his posterity have been capable even of forming a good thought, and much less of doing all that God requires of them; and moreover, that they are all so far involved in the consequences of his fall, and his sin is considered as so much *their own* (he being their representative, standing in their place, and acting for them) that they are even properly punishable for it and liable on that account to everlasting torment, though they had never sinned themselves. It is believed, however, that God hath been pleased to save certain individuals of mankind from this general ruin, but that it was not from any respect to the better character or conduct of such individuals, but of his mere *free and arbitrary grace*. It is also part of the same system, that every good thought and purpose, in the hearts even of those who are thus *elect-ed*, is immediately inspired by God, and that without this continual assistance, to which they give the name of *grace*, no man has any choice but of evil, from the moment of his birth to his death.

It is not easy to imagine, *a priori*, what could have led men into such a train of thinking, so evidently contrary to the plain dictates of reason, and the most natural interpretation of scripture. There is, indeed, an appearance of *humility* in ascribing every thing that is good to God; but to ascribe to him, as all men must do, those *powers* by which we are enabled to perform good works, comes, in fact, to the same thing. *What have we*, as the apostle says, *that*



*we have not received?* How then are we the less indebted to God, whether *he works all our works in us, and for us*, by his own immediate agency, or does it *mediately*, that is, by means of those powers which he has given us for that purpose? With respect to the character of the Divine Being, it certainly loses more by the idea of the predestination of the greatest part of mankind to inevitable destruction, than it can gain by the belief of an arbitrary interference in favor of a few. The whole scheme, therefore, certainly tends to make the divine character and government appear less respectable, indeed execrable.\*

In fact, it is probable that such a scheme as this, would never have entered into the mind of any man, who had been left to his own speculations on the subject, or to his study of the scriptures. Accordingly, we find that the principal parts of this system were first suggested in the heat of controversy; and when the mind was once prepossessed in favor of some of the maxims of it, the rest were gradually introduced to complete the scheme; and the scriptures as in all other cases, were afterwards easily imagined to favor the preconceived hypothesis.

Indeed, the more amiable part of the system, or that which ascribes every thing that is good immediately to God, without respect to second causes, has considerable countenance from the piety of the sacred writers; but their language on this subject, will appear to be as *just* as it is *pious*, when it is rightly interpreted. Many persons, no doubt, will be more easily reconciled to the doctrine of *election* by previously imagining that they themselves are in the number of the elect; and while they can thus fancy themselves to be the peculiar favorites of heaven, they can bear to consider the rest of mankind, as abandoned by the same being to a severer fate. Also, in general, all men are sufficiently inclined to look off from the dark and most objectionable side of any scheme of principles which they adopt.

With respect to the fall of Adam, all that we can learn from the scriptures, interpreted literally, is that the laborious cultivation of the earth, and the mortality of his race, were the consequence of it. This is all that is said by Moses, and likewise all that is alluded to by the apostle Paul, who says, *that by one man sin entered into the world.* For

\* Appendix I,

what he adds *all have sinned* can only mean that all are involved in that *death*, which was the consequence of his sin. If, indeed, this be interpreted literally, it will imply that all are involved in his *guilt* as well as in his sufferings. But this is so unnatural an interpretation, and so evidently contrary to sense and reason (sin being in its own nature a personal thing, and not transferable) that the text was never understood in this sense till the system, the history of which I am writing, was so far advanced, as to require it, and to have prepared the minds of men for it. In like manner, the words of our Savior, *this is my body*, were always understood to mean a *memorial* of his body, till the minds of men were gradually prepared to bear a literal interpretation of them; and then that interpretation was made use of to support the doctrine which suggested it.

In like manner, there is a *predestination* spoken of by the apostle Paul; but, in general, it means the good will and pleasure of God, in giving certain people peculiar privileges, and especially the knowledge of the gospel, for the improvement of which they were answerable. If he does speak of *future glory*, as the consequence of this predestination, it was upon the presumption, that they improved those advantages, and by that means made themselves the proper subjects of future happiness. Or, possibly, in some cases the apostle considering God as the ultimate and proper author of every thing that is good, and of all happiness, might overlook the immediate means and steps, and with this sense of piety, and comprehension of mind, might speak of future glory itself, as the gift of God, and therefore might make no difference in his mind, at that time, between predestination and foreknowledge. But the tenor of all his writings shews, that it was far from being his intention to represent future glory as given by an *arbitrary decree* of God, without any respect to the good works which alone can fit men for it; which good works are as much in a man's power, as any other action of which he is capable.

Having premised these general observations, I now proceed to show by what steps these principles of the utter inability of man to do the will of God as derived from the fall of Adam, the imputation of his sin to all posterity, and the arbitrary predestination of some to eternal life, and the consequent rejection, or reprobation, of the rest of mankind, by which they are devoted to certain and everlasting de-

struction, were first introduced, and at length got the firm establishment they now have in the creeds of almost all christian churches.

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## SECTION I.

### OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE, &C. BEFORE THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

It is remarkable that we find hardly any trace of what are now called the doctrines of *grace, original sin, or predestination*, before the *Pelagian controversy*, which was near the end of the fourth century. I believe all the moderns are agreed, that it was clearly the opinion of all the ancient Fathers; that God has left it entirely in the power of every man to act well or ill. Basnage, who was himself sufficiently orthodox in the modern sense of the word, acknowledges, that though the fathers in general thought that we are indebted to the grace of God for all our virtues, yet they say that the beginning of salvation is from man, and that it depends entirely upon himself. It is not denied, however, but that they might believe an internal influence upon the mind on extraordinary occasions; but, as Vossius observes, none before Augustine supposed that there was an immediate concurrence of divine grace, necessary to every good thought or action.

“God,” says Justin Martyr, “has not made man like the beasts, who can do nothing from choice and judgment; for he would not be worthy of reward or praise, if he did not of himself choose what was good, but was *made* good; not, if he was wicked, could he be justly punished, as not having been such of himself, but only what he had been made.” In support of this he quotes Is. i. 16.—*Wash ye, make ye clean, &c.* Basnage says, that the ancients maintained free will with much warmth, granting men an entire power to be converted or not. Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen, he says were the head of this party.

It is remarkable that Augustine himself, before he engaged in the controversy with Pelagius, held the same

opinion concerning free will with the rest of the Fathers who had preceded him, and he was far from denying this. In particular, he acknowledges, that before this time he had been of opinion, that faith, or at least the beginning of faith and a desire of conversion, was in the power of man. It was a saying of his, "If there be not grace, how should God save the world, and if there be not free will, how can he judge the world? No man," says he, "can be justly condemned for doing that which he was not able to resist." Citing a passage in the son of Sirach, viz. *God left man in the hands of his council, he placed life and death before him, that that which he pleased should be given him*, he says, "Behold here is a very plain proof of the liberty of the human will, for how does God command, if man has not free will, or power to obey?" He also proves, that it is in our power to change the will, from these words of our Savior, *Make the tree good and the fruit good, &c.*

We have almost the same unanimous opinion of the ancients, concerning the effects of the *sin of Adam*, as concerning the natural capacity of man with respect to virtue and vice, and they had occasion to speak to this subject very early, in consequence of the opinion of the Gnostics in general, and the Manicheans in particular; who held that the souls of men were originally of different ranks, and sprung from different principles, good beings having produced some of them, and bad beings the rest; on which account they said some were naturally *carnal* and others *spiritual*. Accordingly, they had taught that sin arose not from the free will of man, but from the substance of *matter*, which they held to be the only source of evil; so that some souls were wicked not by *choice*, but by *nature*.

In opposition to this, Origen maintained, that all souls were by nature equally capable of virtue or vice, and that the differences among men arose merely from the freedom of the will, and the various uses of that freedom, that God left man to his liberty, and rewarded or punished him according to the use he made of it.

It is evident, however, that Origen must have maintained, according to his known philosophical principles, that perfect freedom with respect to virtue and vice was only enjoyed by man in his pre-existent state. For he, with other Platonists, maintained that the souls of men had sinned in heaven, and therefore were united to such bodies as were

a clog and a prison to the soul, and that the *flesh* laid upon it a kind of necessity of sinning. Chrysostom also says, that with an infirm body we derive from Adam a proneness to inordinate affections. But he was far from supposing that men were in any other manner sufferers by the fall of Adam, and least of all that they were personally responsible for his conduct of himself. Le Sueur laments, that this writer was not quite orthodox with respect to original sin, grace, and free will; but he apologizes for him, as having written before the heresy of Pelagius broke out.

The Fathers who, in general, held that the punishment of Adam's sin was only *mortality*, declare, that God subjected men to this mortality not out of anger, but from wisdom and clemency, in order to beget in them a hatred of sin, and "that sin might not be eternal in them." But Titus, bishop of Bostra, who was before Pelagius, taught that death was natural, and not the effect of sin.

Vossius acknowledges, that Clemens Alexandrinus had no knowledge of original sin; and Epiphanius blamed Origen, and John of Jerusalem, for saying that the image of God was lost in man after the expulsion of Adam out of Paradise.

Augustine himself, in his controversy with the Manicheans, declared that it is impossible that souls should be evil by nature. So far was he from supposing that men were responsible for Adam's conduct, that he said, no man "is wise, valiant, or temperate, with the wisdom, valor, or temperance of another, or righteous with the righteousness of another."

The testimony of the Fathers in this period is no less clear against the doctrine of *predestination* to eternal life, without respect to good works. All the Fathers before Augustine, says Whitby, interpreted what the apostle Paul says of predestination, in the 8th and 9th chapters of his epistle to the Romans, of those whom God foreknew to have good purposes; and in a similar manner they explain all the other texts from which the doctrine of election and reprobation is now deduced; and Augustine himself, in his controversy with the Manicheans, interpreted them in the same manner. Melancthon says that all the ancients, except Augustine, asserted that there was some cause of election in ourselves; and Prosper, who took the part of

Augustine, acknowledged that the Pelagians treated his doctrine as a novelty.

Justin Martyr could have no knowledge of arbitrary predestination, when he said, "if every thing come to pass by fate, it is plain that nothing will be in our power. If it be fate that this man shall be good, and the other bad, the one is not to be praised, nor the other blamed."

Didymus, who taught theology at Alexandria (afterwards condemned for his adherence to Origen, but on no other account) says, that predestination depends upon God's foreknowledge of those who would believe the gospel, and live according to it; and Jerome was so far from believing the modern doctrine of election and reprobation, that he thought that no christians would finally perish.

It is sufficiently evident from these testimonies, that the doctrine of the utter inability of man to do the will of God, of the corruption of our nature by the fall of Adam, and of our responsibility for it, together with the doctrine of absolute unconditional election of some to eternal life, and of the reprobation of the rest of mankind, were altogether unknown in the primitive church. We must now consider the Pelagian controversy, and the remarkable change which it occasioned with respect to these doctrines.

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## SECTION II.

### OF THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY, AND THE STATE OF OPINIONS IN CONSEQUENCE OF IT.

PELAGIUS was a British monk, allowed by Augustine himself to have been a man of irreproachable morals, who travelled in company with Celestius, another monk, and a native of Ireland, and with him resided some time at Rome, a little after the year 400. As far as appears, these two men had no opinions different from those which we have seen to have been generally held by the christian writers of that age; but being men of sense and virtue, they opposed with warmth some growing abuses and superstitions, especially with respect to the efficacy of baptism.

This rite, we shall find, was very soon imagined to have a power of *washing away sin*; and a notion of a similar nature had also prevailed respecting the Lord's supper. But it was the former of these superstitions that happened to come in the way of Pelagius to oppose. As an argument that baptism could not, of itself, be of any avail to the pardon of sins, he urged the application of it to infants, who had no sin; he maintained that nothing but good works are of any avail in the sight of God; and that to these alone, which it is in every man's power to perform, the pardon of sin is annexed.

It does not appear that these doctrines, which were the outlines of what has since been called the *Pelagian heresy*, met with any opposition at Rome. But retiring from that city on the approach of the Goths, these monks went to Africa, and Celestius remaining there, Pelagius proceeded to Palestine, where he enjoyed the protection of John, bishop of Jerusalem, while his friend, and his opinions, met with a very different reception from Augustine, bishop of Hypo; who in his account of what followed, says he was first staggered at hearing it asserted, that "infants were not baptized for the remission of sins, but only that they might be sanctified in Christ," by which was probably meant, that they were dedicated to God, and destined to be instructed in the principles of the christian religion.

Upon this, Celestius and his friend were gradually engaged in a warm contest, in the course of which (as was the case with respect to Augustine, their principal opponent) they were probably led to advance more than had originally occurred to them, in order to make their system more complete. Among other things, they are said to have asserted that mankind derives no injury whatever from the fall of Adam; that we are now as capable of obeying the will of God as he was, that otherwise it would have been absurd and cruel to propose laws to men, with the sanction of rewards and punishments; and that men are born as well without vice as without virtue. Pelagius is also said to have maintained that it is even possible for men, if they will use their best endeavors, to live entirely without sin. This, Jerome says, he borrowed from Origen, from whom it passed to Ruffinus, Evagrius, Pontichus, and Jovinian, whom he calls the patriarchs of the Pelagian heresy.

Pelagius did not deny what may be called *external grace*,

or that the doctrines and motives of the gospel are necessary, but he admitted nothing of *internal grace*. He acknowledged, indeed, that the *power* we have to obey the will of God, is the gift of God to us; but he said that the *direction* of this power depends upon ourselves. He is even said to have advanced, after Titus, of Bostra, above mentioned, that we do not die in consequence of the sin of Adam, but by the necessity of nature, and that Adam himself would have died if he had not sinned. Much farther was he from supposing that the *second death*, or the punishment of the wicked in a future world, was any consequence of the sin of Adam.

In several of these positions Pelagius appears to have gone farther than the generality of christians in his time, even of those in the East, where he met with the most favorable reception. He was particularly censured by Chrysostom and Isidore, for asserting that man had no need of any inward assistance, which was generally believed to be afforded, especially on extraordinary occasions, and that man had received no injury whatever from the sin of Adam.

Augustine, in his controversy with the Pelagians, made no difficulty of renouncing many of the things which he had advanced against the Manicheans. Whitby says, that he was not able to answer several of his former arguments, and that the exceptions which he made to some of his own previous maxims were weak and absurd. Thus he had before defined sin to be "the will to do that from which we have no power to abstain; but afterwards he said, he had then defined that which was only sin, but not that which was also the punishment of sin.

In opposition to the doctrine of human merit, he asserted that divine grace is necessary to bend the will, for, that without this we are free only to do evil, but have no power to do good.

As the heathens could not be said to have had that grace of God, spoken of in the gospel, by the help of which alone Augustine supposed that good works were performed; to be consistent with himself, he maintained that none of the works of the heathens were properly good, and that even the good works of Cornelius would have availed nothing without faith in Christ. Sometimes, indeed, he would allow that the good works of the heathens would entitle them to a temporal reward, and lessen their future torments. But



he likewise distinguished himself by saying that such good works were only a kind of *shining sins*. In support of this doctrine, he said that Christ would have died in vain, if, in any other manner than by faith in him, men could have attained to true faith, virtue, righteousness, and wisdom. But in this he did not attend to the doctrine of Paul, who says, that "they who have not the law, are judged without law; they being a law to themselves; their own consciences accusing or else excusing them."

With respect to *original sin*, Augustine strenuously maintained, that infants derive sin from Adam, and that his guilt was, in some way entailed upon them, so that they are obnoxious to punishment on account of it; though he acknowledged it was no proper guilt of theirs, but only that of their ancestor, the *sin* being an act of his will only. Afterwards an improvement was made upon this doctrine by the disciples of Augustine, who asserted that a covenant was made with all mankind in Adam, as their first parent, and that he was made to represent them all; so that, had he obeyed, all his posterity would have been happy through his obedience; but that in his disobedience they are all sinners, his act being imputed and transferred to them all.

Augustine maintains that baptism is necessary to recover men from that state of perdition into which the fall of Adam had brought them, and therefore that all who were not baptized were in a state of damnation. To prove that infants had sinned in Adam, he urged, that otherwise Christ could not be their Savior. He appears, however, to have been shocked at the thoughts of exposing infants to the torments of hell on account of the sin of Adam only; and therefore he maintained, that though they were in hell, their punishment was so little, that they would rather choose to exist under it, than not to exist at all. This was afterwards dressed up as a division, or partition in hell, and was called *Limbus Infantum*. Before the Pelagian controversy, Augustine had said that the souls of infants, dying unbaptized, went neither to heaven nor to hell, but went to a place where they neither enjoyed the vision of God, nor suffered the pains of the damned.

Since, according to the preceding doctrine, the very first motion towards any good works, such as faith and repentance, is immediately from God, and it is not in the power of man to contribute any thing towards it, Augustine was

obliged, in pursuance of his doctrine, to maintain that God had, of his own arbitrary will, predestinated to eternal life all that were actually saved, while the rest of mankind were left exposed to a punishment which they had no power of avoiding. At the same time, however, maintaining, according to the universal opinion of that age, that baptism was the christian *regeneration*, and washed away all sin, original and actual, he was under a necessity of distinguishing between *regeneration* and *salvation*; maintaining that justifying faith, and regenerating grace might be lost, or that the regenerate might have all grace, but not that of perseverance, since it depended upon the decree and good pleasure of God, whether they would persevere to the end or not. In this respect, those who now maintain the doctrine of predestination differ very considerably from Augustine; maintaining that none are truly *regenerated* except the *elect*, and that all these will certainly persevere to the end, and be saved. In the church of Rome, however, and also in that of England, *regeneration* and *baptism* are confounded, and the terms are used as expressing the same thing.

Augustine, whose influence in the churches of Africa was uncontrolled, procured the opinions of his adversary to be condemned in a synod held at Carthage in 412; but they prevailed notwithstanding. The Pelagian doctrine was received with great applause even at Rome. There the conduct of the bishops of Africa, who had stigmatized it as heretical, was condemned, and pope Zozimus was at the head of those who favored Pelagius. Augustine's doctrine of predestination, in particular, was not confirmed by any council within a century after his death, and though it was defended by the most celebrated divines in the West, it was never generally received in the East, and was controverted by many in Gaul, and the favorers of it explained it with more or less latitude. This controversy, which began with the doctrine of grace, and was extended to original sin and predestination, rent the church into the most deplorable divisions in all succeeding ages, and they have been continued, with little intermission, to the present time.

This controversy was, however, almost wholly confined to the western church, while the Greeks continued in the state in which the christian church in general has been represented to have been before the Pelagian controversy; supposing that election, or predestination, was always made

with a view to men's good works. Chrysostom, as well as John of Jerusalem, continued to hold opinions very different from those of Augustine, though these were very soon generally received in the western church; and just in the heat of this controversy, Cassian, a disciple of Chrysostom coming to Marseilles, taught a *middle doctrine*, which was that "the first conversion of the soul to God was the effect of its free choice," so that all *preventing*, as it was called or *predisposing grace*, was denied by him; and this came to be the distinguishing doctrine of those who were afterwards called *Semipelagians*. Prosper and Hilary, who were bishops in Gaul, gave an account of this doctrine to Augustine, but it was so popular, that he did not venture to condemn it altogether, or to call it an impious and pernicious heresy. This controversy, also, interested many persons, and much was written on both sides of the question.

The peculiar opinion of the Semipelagians is expressed in a different manner by different writers, but all the accounts sufficiently agree. Thus some represent them as maintaining that inward grace is not necessary to the first beginning of repentance, but only to our progress in virtue. Others say that they acknowledged the power of grace, but said that faith depends upon ourselves, and good works upon God; and it is agreed upon all hands, that these Semipelagians held that predestination is made upon the foresight of good works, which also continued to be the tenet of the Greek church.

The Semipelagian doctrine is acknowledged by all writers to have been well received in the monasteries of Gaul and especially in the neighborhood of Marseilles; owing in a great measure to the popularity of Cassian, which counteracted the authority of Augustine, and to the irreproachable lives of those who stood forth in defence of it. Prosper, writing to Augustine about these Semipelagians, says "they surpass us in the merit of their lives, and are in high stations in the church."

The assistance of Augustine, though he was then far advanced in life, was called in to combat these Semipelagians and it was the occasion of his writing more treatises on these subjects. In these he still strenuously maintained that the predestination of the elect was independent of any foresight of their good works, but was according to the good pleasur

of God only, and that perseverance comes from God and not from man.

Notwithstanding the popularity of the Semipelagian doctrine, and its being patronized by some persons of considerable rank and influence, the majority of such persons must have been against it; for we find that it was generally condemned whenever any synod was called upon the subject. But there were some exceptions. Thus one which was assembled at Arles, about A. D. 475, pronounced an anathema against those who denied that God would have all men to be saved, or that Christ died for all, or that the heathens might have been saved by the law of nature. Upon the whole, it cannot be said that the doctrine of Augustine was completely established for some centuries; nor indeed was it ever generally avowed in all its proper consequences, and without any qualifications, till after the reformation, when the protestants espoused it, in opposition to the popish doctrine of merit.

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### SECTION III.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE, &C. IN THE MIDDLE AGES, AND TILL THE REFORMATION.

It is pretty evident that, notwithstanding the great nominal authority of Augustine, whom it was seldom reckoned safe expressly to contradict, upon the whole, the Semipelagian doctrine, may be said to have been most prevalent in England and in France, especially during the 6th and 7th centuries. All the *grace* that was generally contended for in this period, was that which they supposed to be imparted at baptism, or a kind of supernatural influence which did not fail to accompany or to follow men's own endeavors. Consequently, the operation of it in practice did not materially differ from that of Semipelagianism itself. All the difference in speculation was that, whereas Pelagius supposed the power of man to do the will of God, was given him in his formation, and was therefore properly inherent in him, as much as bodily strength, that which was assert-

ed by his opponents in these ages was something foreign indeed to a man's self, and imparted at another time, or occasionally, but still, in fact, at *his command*, and the doctrine of *reprobation* was never much relished.

In a council held at Orange in 529, against the Pelagian and Semipelagians, it was determined that, "all those who have been baptized, and have received grace by baptism can and ought to accomplish the things which belong to their salvation; Jesus Christ enabling them, provided they will labor faithfully," and not only do the Fathers assembled upon this occasion profess not to believe that there are men destined to evil or sin by the will of God, but they say that, "if there be any who will believe so great an evil, they will denounce an hundred anathemas upon them with all testation."

In this state things continued, the Pelagian or Semipelagian doctrine being generally received, till about the middle of the ninth century. For, notwithstanding the credit of Augustine's name, and the authority of his writings, his books were more generally read in those ages than *Cassian's Collections*, which was thought to be the best book of institutions for a monk to form his mind upon, and which gave a strong impression in favor of the doctrine of the Greek church. This was very apparent in the ninth century, when Godeschalchus was severely reprov'd by Hilarion for asserting some of Augustine's doctrines, and laying particular stress upon them.

This Godeschalchus was a monk of Orbais, in the diocese of Rheims, who, being fond of Augustine's doctrine, carried them rather farther than Augustine himself had done; teaching, among other things, that baptism did not save men, that God had predestinated the greatest part of mankind to damnation, and that none would be saved but the elect, for whom only Christ had shed his blood. For this he was oppos'd by Rabanus Maurus, and a council being held on the subject, at Mayence, and also at Cologne he was condemn'd, and at length died in prison. Remigius, Archbishop of Lyons, wrote in his favor, and maintained that Godeschalchus had not said that God predestinated the reprobate to sin and wickedness, but only that he had allowed them to their own free will, to be punished because they would not believe; and in a council held at Valence in Dauphny, in which Remi himself presid'd, the dec-

of the former council were annulled. But still the members of this council founded the doctrine of divine decrees on God's prescience that the wicked would destroy themselves. We find no other decisions of any synod or council after this, and different opinions continued to be held on the subject.

When we come to the age of the proper *schoolmen*, it is somewhat difficult, notwithstanding they write professedly and at large on all these subjects, to state their opinions with precision, as they seem to confound themselves and their readers with such nice distinctions. In general, Augustine, being the oracle of the schools, his doctrine was professed by them all, even by the Franciscans, as well as the Dominicans. They only pretended to dispute about the true sense of his writings. His general doctrine with respect to grace and predestination was so well established, that we only find some subtle distinctions upon the subject, and some evasions of his doctrine by those who did not altogether relish it.

It was agreed among the theologians of this age, that infants are properly chargeable with the sin of Adam, and liable to damnation on that account, because the will of Adam was in some sort the will of the infant. Thomas Aquinas endeavors to prove that it was only the first sin of Adam that could be transferred to his posterity, and that vitiated all his offspring, his subsequent offences affecting himself only. He farther maintains that original sin, being communicated in the act of generation, a person born miraculously cannot have it.

According to some of the schoolmen, the power of man was but inconsiderable even before the fall. Peter Lombard says, that "by the grace of God given to man, he could resist evil, but could not do good. Free choice (he says) is the faculty of reason and will, by which with the help of grace, we can choose good, or without it evil."

Thomas Aquinas not only asserted all Augustine's doctrines, especially that of predestination, but added this to it, that whereas it was formerly, in general, held that the providence of God extended to all things, he thought that this was done by means of God's concurring immediately to the production of every thought and action. And, not to make God the author of sin, a distinction was made between the *positive act* of sin, which was said not to be evil, and its

want of conformity to the laws of God, which, being a negation, was no positive being.

There is no small difficulty in settling the opinion of Thomas Aquinas about grace, though he writes so largely on the subject. He says, that a man cannot even prepare himself for the grace of God without prior grace. Yet he says, in general, that a man must prepare himself for receiving grace and that then the infusion of grace necessarily follows. He also says, that a man's free will is necessary to receive the grace by which he is justified. And yet he says, that it cannot be known to any person, except by revelation, whether he has grace. No modern fanatic can say any thing more favorable to the doctrine of instantaneous conversion than this writer does. "The justification of a sinner (he says) is in an instant;" and again, that "it is the greatest work of God, and altogether miraculous."

The manner in which this writer, and other catholics make room for the doctrine of *merit*, together with these high notions concerning grace, which they never professedly abandoned, is not a little curious. "A man may merit of God," says Thomas Aquinas, "not absolutely, indeed, but as receiving a reward for doing that which God enables him to do." Yet he still acknowledges, that a man cannot merit the the *first grace* either for himself, or for another, and that Christ alone can do this.

If Thomas Aquinas could find room for the doctrine of merit in his system, which was professedly built on that of Augustine, it may well be presumed that the disciples of Duns Scotus (the head of the Franciscan order, as Aquinas was the chief of the Dominicans) and who opposed the doctrine of Aquinas as much as he could, were not less favorable to the doctrine of merit. Burnet says, that Scotus and the Franciscans denied the predetermination of the will, and asserted the proper freedom of it, and that Durandus denied that immediate concurrence of God with the human will, which had been asserted by Aquinas, but that in this he had not many followers except Adola, and a few others.

At length the members of the church of Rome, not only attained to a firm persuasion concerning the doctrine of merit, notwithstanding the slender ground on which it was built, but imagined that not only Christ, but also some *men*, and especially martyrs, and those who lived a life of great austerity, had even more merit than themselves had occasion

for; so that there remained some good works in the balance of their account more than they wanted for their own justification. These they termed *works of supererogation*, and imagined that they might be transferred to the account of other persons. The whole accumulated stock of this merit was called the *treasure of the church*, and was thought to be at the disposal of the popes. Clement VI. in his bull for the celebration of the jubilee in 1350, speaks of this treasure as composed of "the blood of Christ, the virtue of which is infinite, of the merit of the virgin mother of God, and of all the saints." This doctrine was the foundation of those *indulgences*, of which an account will be given in another place, and the monstrous abuse of which brought about the reformation by Luther.

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## SECTION IV.

### OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE, ORIGINAL SIN, AND PREDESTINATION, SINCE THE REFORMATION.

As good generally comes out of evil, so, sometimes, and for a season at least, evil arises out of good. This, however, was remarkably the case with respect to these doctrines in consequence of the reformation by Luther. For the zeal of this great man against the doctrine of *indulgences*, and that of *merit* as the foundation of it, unhappily led him and others so far into the opposite extreme, that from his time the doctrines of grace, original sin, and predestination, have been generally termed the *doctrines of the reformation*, and every thing that does not agree with them has been termed *popish*, and branded with other opprobrious epithets.

These doctrines, I observed, originated with Augustine, and though they never made much progress in the Greek church, they infected almost all the Latin churches. We see plain traces of them among the Waldenses, who were the earliest reformers from popery. For, in the confession of their faith bearing the date of 1120, they say, "We are sinners in Adam, and by Adam," and in another confession, dated 1532, they say, that "all who are or shall be saved,



God has elected from the foundation of the world, and the whoever maintains free will, denies predestination, and the grace of God." Wickliffe also believed the necessity of man's being assisted by divine grace, and without this he could not see how a human being could make himself acceptable to God.

But if we were sufficiently acquainted with all the opinions of the Waldenses, and other early reformers, we might, perhaps, meet with many things that would qualify the seeming rigor of these articles. It is certain, however, that neither among the ancient reformers, nor among the Dominicans, or any others who leaned the most to the doctrine of Augustine in the church of Rome, was the scheme so connected in all its parts, and rendered so systematical and uniform as it was by Luther and the reformers who followed him. Besides that Luther was led to lay the stress that he did upon the doctrine of grace, in consequence of the abuse of that of *merit* in the church of Rome, he had himself been, as was observed before, a monk of the order of Augustine, and had always been a great admirer of his writings. Also most of those of the church of Rome who first opposed him were of a different persuasion; the doctrine of Augustine having been either abandoned, or nearly explained away, by the generality of the divines of that age. Upon the whole, therefore, it was not to be expected, that such a person as Luther was, should begin reformation upon any more liberal principles. The fact however, is notorious.

Luther, says Mosheim, carried the doctrine of justification by faith to such a length, as probably, contrary to his intention, derogated not only from the necessity of good works, but even from their obligation and importance. He would not allow them to be considered either as a condition or the means of salvation, nor even as a preparation for receiving it. He adds, that the doctrine of absolute predestination, irresistible grace, and human impotence, were never carried to a more excessive length by any divine than they were by Luther. Amsdorf, a Lutheran divine, maintained, he says, that good works were even an impediment to salvation. Flacius, another Lutheran, held, that original sin was not an *accident*, but of the very substance of human nature.

In some of the first confessions of faith published by the

Lutherans, and others of the first reformers, the doctrines of grace, original sin, and predestination, are laid down with remarkable rigor, and a studied exactness of expression. The Augustan confession says, "On the account of Adam's sin we are liable to the wrath of God, and eternal death, and the corruption of human nature is propagated from him. This vice of our origin (*vitium originis*) is truly a damning sin, and causing eternal death to all who are not born again by baptism and the spirit." We find, however, some expressions rather stronger than even these in the Gallic confession. "We believe that this vice" (*vitium*) meaning original sin, "is truly a sin, which makes all and every man, not even excepting infants in the womb, liable in the sight of God, to eternal death." If any doctrine can make a man shudder, it must be this. Believing this, could any man (unless he had a firmer persuasion than most men can, by the force of any imagination, attain to, of himself being among the number of the elect) bless God that he is a descendant of Adam.

Calvin held these doctrines with no less rigor; and as the Lutherans afterwards abandoned them, they are now generally known by the name of *Calvinistic doctrines*. The ancient Helvetic doctrines, says Mosheim, were Semi-pelagian. Zuinglius said that the kingdom of heaven was open to all who acted according to the dictates of right reason; but Calvin, when he came among them, maintained that the everlasting condition of mankind in a future world, was determined, from all eternity, by the unchangeable order of the Deity, arising from his sole good pleasure or free will.

Luther's rigid doctrine of election was opposed by Erasmus, who wished well to the reformation, but was concerned as well for the violence with which it was carried on, as for the unjustifiable length to which Luther carried his opposition, especially with respect to the doctrine of predestination. Luther never answered the last piece of Erasmus on the subject of free will; and Melancthon, the great friend of Luther, and the support of his cause, being convinced by the reasoning of Erasmus, came over to his opinion on that subject. And it is very remarkable, that by degrees, and indeed pretty soon afterwards, the Lutherans, in general, changed also; and some time after the death of Luther and Melancthon, the divines who were deputed by the elector

of Saxony, to compose the famous book entitled *The Concord*, abandoned the doctrine of their master, and taught that the decree of election was not absolute, that God saves all who will believe, that he gives all men sufficient means of salvation, and that grace may be resisted.

The principles of all the other reformed churches are, however, still Calvinistic, and among them those of the churches of England, and of Scotland, notwithstanding the generality of divines of the former establishment are acknowledged to be no great admirers of that system.

In Holland, there was no obligation on the ministers to maintain what are called the Calvinistic doctrines till the synod of Dort; when, by the help of faction in the state, the Calvinistic party in that country prevailed, and those who opposed them, and in consequence of *remonstrating* against their proceedings, got the name of *Remonstrants*, were cruelly persecuted and banished. It is remarkable, however, as Mosheim observes, that since the time of that synod, the doctrine of absolute decrees has lost ground every day.

With respect to the church of Rome, it cannot be denied, that the cause of sound morality had suffered much by means of many sophistical distinctions, introduced by their divines and casuists about the time of the reformation, as by the distinction of sins into *venial* and *mortal*; the latter of which only, they say, deserve the pains of hell; whereas the former may be atoned for by penances, liberality to the church, &c. It was another of their tenets, that if men do not put a bar to the efficacy of the sacraments, particularly that of penance; if there had been but imperfect acts of sorrow accompanying them (such as sorrow for the difficulties a man brings himself into by his vices) the use of the sacraments will so far complete these imperfect acts of sorrow as to justify us. The Jesuits introduced several other exceedingly dangerous maxims with respect to morals; but they were never received by the catholics in general, and were sufficiently exposed by their enemies the Jansenists, within the pale of that church.

The Fathers of the council of Trent, found much difficulty in settling the doctrines of grace and predestination, many of the members, particularly the Dominicans, being attached to the doctrine of Augustine. At length their sole object was to make such a decree as should give the

least offence, though it should decide nothing. Among other things, it was determined that good works are, of their own nature, meritorious to eternal life; but it is added, by way of softening, that it is through the goodness of God that he makes his own gifts to be merits in us. It is the opinion of many in the church of Rome, and seems, says Burnet, to be established by the council of Trent, that remission of sins is previous to justification, and freely given by Christ; in consequence of which a grace is infused, by which a person becomes truly righteous, and is considered as such by God; but this, he adds, seems to be a dispute about words.

At the council of Trent, Catarin revived an opinion which was said to have been invented by Occam, and supported by some of the schoolmen, viz. that God has chosen a small number of persons, as the blessed virgin, and the apostles, &c. whom he was determined to save without any foresight of their good works, and that he also wills that all the rest should be saved, providing for them all necessary means for that purpose, but, that they are at liberty to use or refuse them. This opinion was that of Mr Baxter in England, from whom it is frequently with us, and especially the Dissenters, called the *Baxterian scheme*. Upon the whole, the council of Trent made a decree in favor of the Semipelagian doctrine.

At first Bellarmine, Suarez, and the Jesuits in general, were predestinarians, but afterwards the Fathers of that order abandoned that doctrine, and differed from the Semipelagians only in this, that they allowed a *preventing grace*, but such as is subject to the freedom of the will.

The author of this which is commonly called *the middle scheme* or the doctrine of *sufficient grace for all men*, was Molina, a Jesuit; from whom the favorers of that doctrine were called *Molinists*, and the controversy between them and the *Jansenists* (so called from Jansenius, a great advocate for the doctrines of Augustine) has been as vehement as any controversy among protestants on the same subject. And though besides the council of Trent, whose decrees are copious enough, appeals were frequently made to the popes, and their decisions were also procured, the controversy still continues. Of so little effect is the authority of men to prevent different opinions in articles of faith. Different popes have themselves been differently disposed with respect to

these doctrines; and on some occasions a respect for the Jesuits, who were peculiarly devoted to the popes, was the means of procuring more favor to the tenets which they espoused, than they would otherwise have met with.

Among protestants, there are great numbers who still hold the doctrines which are termed *Calvinistic* in their greatest rigor; and some time ago they were usually distinguished into two kinds, viz. the *Supralapsarians*, who maintained that God had originally and expressly decreed the fall of Adam, as a foundation for the display of his justice and mercy; while those who maintained that God only *permitted* the fall of Adam were called *Sublapsarians*, their system of decrees concerning election and reprobation being, as it were, subsequent to that event. But if we admit the divine prescience, there is not in fact, any difference between the two schemes; and accordingly that distinction is now seldom mentioned.

It is evident, that, at present the advocates for the doctrine of absolute and unconditional election, with the rest that are called *Calvinistic*, consist chiefly of persons of little learning or education; and were the creeds of the established protestant churches to be revised, the articles in favor of those doctrines would, no doubt, be omitted. But while they continue there, and while the spirit of them is diffused through all the public offices of religion, the belief of them will be kept up among the vulgar, and there will always be men enough ready to accept of church preferment on the condition of subscribing to what they do not believe, and of reciting day after day such offices as they totally disapprove.

Things have been so long in this situation, especially in England, where the minds of the clergy are more enlightened, and where few of them, in comparison, will ever pretend that they really believe the articles of faith to which they have subscribed, according to the plain and obvious sense of them; and the legislature has been so often applied to in vain to relieve them in this matter, by removing those subscriptions, that we cannot now reasonably expect any reformation of this great evil, till it shall please divine providence to overturn all these corrupt *establishments* of what is called christianity, but which have long been the secure retreat of doctrines disgraceful to christianity. For they only serve to make hypocrites of those who live by them, and infidels of those who, without looking farther, either mis-

these corruptions of christianity for the genuine doctrine of it, or, being apprized of the insincerity of the clergy subscribing them, think that all religion is a farce, has no hold of the consciences of those who make the best profession of it. With all this within ourselves, unfavorable is the aspect that these doctrines exhibit to the world at large, and what an obstruction must they be to the general propagation of christianity in the world. I cannot help making this general reflection at the close of these three parts of my work, which relate to those gross corruptions of christianity, which exist in their full force in the established protestant churches. In what follows, the *alms*, as they are called, are more particularly concerned, though, it will be seen, that even with respect to them, the protestant churches are far from being blameless.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE  
REMAINING PARTS, WITH THEIR APPENDICES,  
A B R I D G E D.

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PART IV.

THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS RELATING TO SAINTS AND ANGELS.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

THE idolatry of the christian church began with the deification and proper worship of Jesus Christ, but it was far from ending with it. For, from similar causes, christians were soon led to pay an undue respect to men of eminent worth and sanctity, which at length terminated in as proper a worship of them, as that which the heathens had paid to their heroes and demigods, addressing prayer to them, in the same manner, as to the Supreme Being himself. The same undue veneration led them also to a superstitious respect for their *relics*, the places where they had lived, their pictures and images, and indeed every thing that had borne a near relation to them; so that at length, not only were those persons whom they termed *saints*, the objects of their worship, but also their relics and images and neither with respect to the external forms, nor, as far as we can perceive their internal sentiments, were christians to be at all distinguished from those who bowed down to wood and stone in the times of paganism.

## SECTION I.

## OF THE RESPECT PAID TO SAINTS AND ANGELS.

THE foundation of all the superstitious respect that was paid to dead men by christians, is to be looked for in the principles of the heathen philosophy, and the customs of the pagan religion.

The first step in this business was a custom which cannot be said to have been unnatural, but it shows how much attention ought to be given to the beginnings of things. It was to meet at the tombs of the martyrs, not by way of devotion to them, but because they thought that their devotion to God was more sensibly excited in those places; and few persons, perhaps, would have been aware of any ill consequence that could have followed from it.

It was also an early custom among christians to make offerings annually in the name of the deceased, especially the martyrs, as an acknowledgment, that though they were dead, they considered them as still living, and members of their respective churches. These offerings were usually made on the anniversary of their death.

The beginning of this superstitious respect for the martyrs seems to have been at the death of Polycarp, (A. D. 166) and in forty years afterwards it had degenerated into this gross superstition.

The respect paid to martyrs was gradually extended, in some degree, to others, who also were considered after their deaths as those who had triumphed over the world, and were gone to receive the prize for which they had contended. In imitation of carrying in triumph those who won the prizes in the Grecian games, christians interred their dead with singing of psalms and lighted tapers.

Since in the lapse of time, the dates of the martyrs' deaths had been lost, the festivals in honor of their memory were appointed on the anniversary pagan holidays. This suited the common people, who had no objection to forsake their old religion, and embrace Christianity, if they could be allowed the same entertainments and indulgences as before. The result was, that with a change of name from Pagan to Christian, there was but little change of the heart and life, and the heathen were heathen still.

As the christians had been used to meet, for the purpose



of public worship, at the tombs of the martyrs; when the Empire became Christian, they sometimes erected magnificent buildings on those places, and such churches were said to be built *to their honor*, and were distinguished by their names, as they continue to be to this day; and when they had not the martyrs themselves to bury there, at least they got some of their *relics*. In this manner by degrees, each remarkable saint had his proper temple, just as the heathen gods and heroes had theirs. This practice was approved by the greatest men of that age.

#### WORSHIP PAID TO SAINTS AND ANGELS.

As early as the beginning of the third century arose the custom of praying for the dead, that they might enjoy a quiet repose in their intermediate state, and a speedy and happy resurrection. They even prayed for the virgin Mary; and also in some cases for the damned that their torments might be lessened.

At first it was hardly supposed that the departed could know what was going on among the living, but as the martyrs and saints were more thought of than other persons, it was soon imagined that their state after death might be better than that of others. They were supposed to have great influence with God, and to be admitted to his presence.

In the third century, however, Origen says, prayer was not to be offered to any *derived being*, not even to Christ himself, but to God the Father of all.

Prayer to the dead began with the martyrs, as well as prayers for the dead, but it was not till near the end of the fourth century, that it was imagined that they could hear those who invoked them, near the place of their interment. In the fifth century, they prayed to God to hear the intercession of the saints and martyrs in their behalf. And, notwithstanding, the pious were perplexed with many doubts on the subject, it gradually came to pass that direct invocation to the departed took the place of prayers put up in their behalf. Gregory the first contributed very much to it in the beginning of the seventh century. He supposed some of the saints enjoyed the beatific vision of God. But Hugh de Victor as late as the twelfth century says that many still doubt whether the saints hear the prayers of those who invoke them, and that it is a difficult question to decide.

In the fifth century no opposition was made to the invocation of saints. Their images were worshipped; and this worship or the forms of consecration were supposed to draw into the image the propitious presence of the saint, or celestial being thus represented.

This excessive veneration for the dead, and for their relics, was greatly promoted by the eloquent preachers of those times. Chrysostom spoke thus: "The gentiles will laugh to hear me talk of the acts of persons dead and buried, and consumed to dust; but they are not to imagine that the bodies of martyrs, like those of common men, are destitute of all active force and energy; since a greater power than that of the human soul is superadded to them, the power of the Holy Spirit, which by working miracles in them, demonstrates the truth of the resurrection."

Theodorit, the ecclesiastical historian, writes thus in the fifth century: "The temples of our martyrs," says this historian, "are shining and conspicuous, eminent for their grandeur, and the variety of their ornaments, and displaying far and wide the splendor of their beauty. These we visit, not once, or twice, or five times in the year, but frequently offer up hymns each day to the Lord of them. In health we beg the continuance of it. In sickness the removal of it. The childless beg children; and when these blessings are obtained, we beg the secure enjoyment of them. When we undertake any journey, we beg them to be our companions and guides in it, and when we return safe, we give them our thanks. And that those who pray with faith and sincerity obtain what they ask is manifestly testified by the number of offerings which are made to them in consequence of the benefits received. For some offer the figure of eyes, some of feet, some of hands, made either of gold or silver, which the Lord accepts, though but of little value, measuring the gift by the faculty of the giver. But all these are evident proofs of the cure of as many distempers, being placed there as monuments of the facts, by those who have been made whole. The same monuments likewise proclaim the power of the dead, whose power also demonstrates their God to be the true God."

The controversy between Vigilantius and Jerome showed the temper of the times, and of the men. Vigilantius maintained, as the articles are enumerated by Middleton, that the honor paid to the rotten bones and dust of martyrs,

keeping them in the churches, and lighting up wax candles before them, after the manner of the heathens, were the ensigns of idolatry; that the celibacy of the clergy, and their vows of chastity were the seminary of lewdness; that to pray for the dead, or to desire the prayers of the dead, was superstitious: and that the souls of the departed saints and martyrs were at rest in some particular place, whence they could not remove themselves at pleasure, so as to be present every where to the prayers of their votaries; that the sepulchres of their martyrs ought not to be worshipped, nor their fasts or vigils to be observed; and lastly that the signs and wonders said to be wrought by their relics, and and at their sepulchres, served to no good end or purpose of religion.

These were the *sacrilegious tenets*, as Jerome calls them, which he could not hear with patience, or without the utmost grief, and for which he declared Vigilantius to be a most detestable heretic, venting his foul mouthed blasphemies against the relics of the martyrs, which were daily working signs and wonders. He bids him go into the churches of those martyrs, and he would be cleansed from the evil spirit which possessed him, and feel himself burnt, not by those wax candles, which so much offended him, but by invisible flames, which would force that dæmon who talked within him, to confess himself to be the same who had personated a Mercury, perhaps a Bacchus, or some other of their gods among the heathens.

In this period, an undue respect was paid to angels, who were believed to transact much of the business of this world, by commission from God. This sprang from a Gnostic error, alluded to by Paul, Coll. ij. 18. Praying to angels was forbidden as idolatrous by the council of Laodicea in 364.

#### WORSHIP OF SAINTS AND ANGELS IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

The superstitious respect paid to saints increased. Prayers instead of being offered to them exclusively at their tombs and on the anniversaries of their death, were soon addressed to them at all times and in all places. Omnipresence was virtually ascribed them. In fact they succeeded in all respects to the honors which had been paid to the pagan deities. Names were altered, but the spirit

of idolatry possessed the bulk of the people, as it did before their conversion to Christianity.

In the eleventh century, statues were not erected to saints, but images were common. The very temples, altars, and images of the pagans were converted to the uses of the Christians. Dr Middleton saw at Rome a statue of the pagan god Bacchus, worshipped as a female saint. The celebrated heathen temple called the Pantheon was dedicated to the blessed Virgin and all the saints, and each worshipper could choose his favorite patron, as under the pagan system. Even the names were in some cases hardly changed, St Appollinaris succeeding to Apollo, and St Martina to Mars. Pictures of scenes in which the saints had interposed for human aid, were, after the heathen custom, hung up in the temples. The popish worship in its particulars followed quite exactly the ancient idolatrous ritual. As each country had its favorite god or goddess, for example, Athens Minerva, Persia Mithra or Sol, so St George became the tutelary patron of England, St Denis of France, St Januarius of Naples, &c.

But the saints increasing until their number was troublesome, the custom of *Canonization* was instituted in the 9th or 10th century, by which none could be admitted to sacred honors until a bishop or the Pope had declared him worthy of them. This also was following the custom of *apotheosis* among the Greeks and *deification* among the Romans. Many were canonized who were little entitled to the epithet of saints, in proof of which we may adduce the names of Dominic and Thomas a Becket. Some of the saints proved on investigation to be only imaginary beings, who never had any existence; as St Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins, the seven sleepers, St George, St Christopher, St Veronica. In the passion for canonizing, some very ludicrous mistakes were committed; out of the word Soracte, the name of an Italian mountain, was born St Oreste; from an imperfect inscription, *prefectus viarum*, was produced St Viar, and England worshipped the cloak of St Alban under the high-sounding title of St Amphibolus.

Gregory the fourth introduced a festival in honor of *all saints* in general.

These abuses of religious worship reached a monstrous pitch before the Reformation, and though they have been

somewhat, they have not been fundamentally, changed, since that event. The effects have been what might be expected; the true worship of God has been neglected, and the grand obligations of religion have been loosened, in countries where these superstitions have prevailed.

Angels as well as saints were also honored with religious worship; St Michael had his church and his festival, and prayers were addressed to this order of beings for the pardon of sins and for eternal life.

## SECTION II.

### OF PICTURES AND IMAGES IN CHURCHES.

TEMPLES having been built in honor of saints and martyrs, it was natural to adorn them with paintings and sculptures, representing their exploits, since a similar custom prevailed amongst the heathen. The origin of the usage was in Cappadocia, in the fourth or fifth century. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, in Italy, a convert from Paganism, a person of senatorial rank, and of talents and learning, rebuilt his church, dedicated it to Felix, the martyr, and in the porticos of it, had the miracles of Moses and Christ painted, together with the acts of Felix and other martyrs, whose relics were there deposited. The wealthy christians vied with each other who should build and ornament their churches the most expensively. According to Chrysostom, pictures and images were to be seen in the principal churches in his day; but that was in the East.

The images of Christ were at first symbolical, in the form of a lamb, of which sort Epiphanius saw one, in 389, and was so provoked at it, that he tore it. A council of Constantinople, in 707, ordered that the pictures of Christ should be drawn in the human figure.

### OF THE WORSHIP OF IMAGES.

Pictures and images, at first employed for ornament, or the commemoration of particular saints, or to instruct the ignorant, gradually were employed for graver purposes, viz: as the objects of worship, the soul of the saint being supposed to be present in his image (as the mind resides in the body) which was in fact a pagan notion.

Gregory the Great encouraged the use of images for the purpose of teaching those who could not read, but he dis-

approved of their being worshipped. In a little more than a century after, Gregory the second strenuously advocated the worship of them, and was in a continual quarrel with the emperor Leo Isauricus on the subject. It was under the previous pope Constantine, that the controversy first began, with the emperor Philippicus. Hence the heresy of the *Iconoclasts*, or image-breakers, since the subjects of the emperor pulled these objects down from the churches and destroyed them. For this offence the pope excommunicated the emperor, and absolved his subjects from their allegiance. Pope Constantine did the same to Leo Isauricus.

The dispute rather waxed than waned, but idolatry triumphed over common sense and pure religion, and even the second commandment of the decalogue was rendered virtually null and void, and God himself was worshipped by images, under pope Stephen the third. Indeed, for consistency's sake, the papists actually left that commandment out of some copies, and to hide the falsification from the ignorant, and make the number good, split one of the others into two.

In imitation of the heathen practice, Leo the third caused incense to be offered to images.

After many fluctuations in the worship of images in the East, the second council of Nice, in 787, decreed that crucifixes should be made, consisting of any material, and to be dedicated and put up in churches, houses, upon walls, and upon the highways. Images of the Savior, the virgin Mary, the angels, and the saints, were to be made and worshipped. Statues or bas reliefs were not permitted by this council. The Greeks were so enamored with this worship of crucifixes and images, that they regarded the council as a merciful interposition from heaven, and instituted in honor of it an anniversary festival, called *the feast of orthodoxy*.

The images representing the Deity were disapproved of by this council, but they were in great favor in the West, were sanctioned in the council of Trent, provided they were *decently made*, and those who held it unlawful to have such images, were expressly condemned at Rome in 1690.

The worship of images in the West was, however, checked by the opposition of Charlemagne, and his successors. They were allowed to be retained for the purposes of ornament and instruction, but not of worship.

But the greatest foe to this superstitious practice was

Claudius, bishop of Turin, a man of great ability and zeal, who used both his pen and his ecclesiastical authority against images themselves, as well as against their being worshipped; because he found that if they were retained, they would be worshipped by the ignorant common people. About the same time, Agobard, bishop of Lyons, wrote ably against the worship of images, and also against dedicating churches to any but God.

But notwithstanding this opposition of emperors and bishops, both the Gallican and German clergy, as well as other nations, gradually yielded to the idolatry, through the influence of the Roman pontiffs.

In the East, images were not worshipped without interruption after the second council of Nice, but Theodora, governing her son Michael the third, procured their final establishment in 842. But the Greeks never had any images besides those on plain surfaces, or pictures; they never approved of statues.

In relation to this subject, it has been asserted, that christians never worshipped, properly speaking, the images themselves, but only addressed themselves to the saints whom they represented. But that their regards did terminate in the image, as much as if had been the saint himself, is evident from the history of image worship and the acknowledgment of those who practise it. In the eleventh century, it was debated in the Greek church, whether there was an *inherent sanctity* in images; and though it was determined in a council, that the images of Christ and of the saints did not partake "of the nature of the divine Savior, or of the saints;" yet it was maintained "that they were enriched with a certain communication of divine grace."

The Latin church has by no means been behind that of the Greeks in this respect.

Among acts of worship, they reckon the oblation of incense, and lights; and the reason given by them for all this, is, because the honor of the image, or type, passes to the original, or prototype; so that direct worship was to terminate in the image itself.

Thomas Aquinas, and many others after him, expressly teach that the same acts and degrees of worship which are due to the original, are also due to the image. They think that an image has such a relation to the original, that both ought to be worshipped by the same act; nay that to wor-

ship the image with any other kind of act, is to worship it on its own account, which they think is idolatry. On the other hand, those who adhere to the Nicene doctrine say that the image is to be worshipped with an inferior degree of homage; and that otherwise idolatry must follow: so that whichever of the two schemes be adopted, idolatry must be the consequence with some or other of the advocates for this worship.

### SECTION III.

#### OF THE VENERATION FOR RELICS.

A SUPERSTITIOUS respect being paid to martyrs, it was natural that their relics should next be regarded as peculiarly sacred. But the first and second centuries were untouched by this taint. It began to appear about the time of Constantine. Julian and Eunapius cast it as a reproach at Christians. Chrysostom furthered the superstition by his eloquence. *Holy earth* from Jerusalem was much valued in the time of Augustine. The trade in bones and relics was brisk in 386, and the piety of many consisted in carrying and keeping them. Laws could not withstand the growing abuse. The bodies of apostles, saints, and martyrs were taken up, and deposited in churches, dedicated to their memory. A memorable instance of this custom occurred in the fourth century, when the bones of the protomartyr Stephen were exhumed—their resting-place having been supernaturally made known—and conveyed to Jerusalem.

The relics were divided and subdivided to meet the constantly increasing demand; oratories and chapels were built where they were deposited; they spread from country to country; and were said to be endued with a miraculous efficacy.

But Vigilantius, a priest of Barcelona, stood out in bold relief from this superstitious age, and manfully breasted this torrent of corruptions. "We see," says he, "a pagan rite introduced into our churches under the pretext of religion, when heaps of wax candles are lighted up in the sun-shine, and people every where kissing and adoring, I know not what contemptible dust, reserved in little vessels, and wrapped up in fine linen. These men do great honor truly to the blessed martyrs, by lighting up paltry candles to those whom the lamb, in the midst of the throne, illuminates with



all the lustre of his majesty." Jerome, who answered Vigilantius, did not deny the practice, or that it was borrowed from the pagans, but he defended it. "That," says he, "was only done to idols, and was then to be detested, but this is done to martyrs, and is therefore to be received."

A superstitious respect for relics, especially for the true cross of Christ, had advanced far in the sixth century, and many persons boasted of having in their possession the real wood of that cross. And when image-worship began, that of relics followed, as an accessory. Images with relics enshrined within them were regarded as the best kind, and as a complete preservative for both body and soul. No presents were considered as of more value than relics; and the popes could easily give the world a plentiful supply, after the discovery of the catacombs, a subterranean place, where many of the Romans had buried their dead.

In the ninth century, the demand for relics was so enormous, as to require no little dexterity in the clergy to supply it. As the most valued relics came from the East, the Greeks made a gainful traffic with the Latins for legs, arms, skulls, jaw bones,—many of which had belonged to pagan skeletons, and some were not even human.

We may form some idea of the value that was put upon some relics in that superstitious and ignorant age from the following circumstance, and this is only one instance of great numbers that might be collected from history. Boleslas, a king of Poland, wishing to show his gratitude to Otho the third emperor of Germany, who had erected his duchy into a kingdom, made him a present of an arm of St Adalbert in a silver case. The Emperor was far from slighting the present, but placed it in a new church which he had built at Rome in honor of this Adalbert. He also built a monument in honor of the same saint.

The greatest traffic for relics was during the Crusades, and that many impositions were practised in this business, was evident from the very pretensions themselves; the same thing, for example, the skull of the same person was to be seen in different places, and more wood of the true cross of Christ, than, they say, would make a ship.

A happy method was thought of by Gregory the first, or some other person of that age, to multiply the virtue of

relics, without multiplying the relics themselves: for instead of giving the relic of any saint, he contented himself with putting into a box a piece of cloth which was called *brandeum*, which had only touched the relics. It is said, that in the time of Pope Leo, some Greeks having doubted whether such relics as these were of any use; the Pope, in order to convince them, took a pair of scissors, and that on cutting one of these cloths, blood came out of it.

We cannot wonder at the great demand for relics, when we consider the virtues that were ascribed to them by the priests and friars who were the venders of them in that ignorant age. They pretended that they had power to fortify against temptations, to increase grace and merit, to fright away devils, to still winds and tempests, to secure from thunder, lightning, blasting, and all sudden casualties and misfortunes; to stop all infectious disorders, and to cure as many others as any mountebank ever pretended to do. Who that had money would choose to be without such powerful preservatives?

The Fathers of the council of Trent appointed relics to be venerated, but, with their usual caution, they did not determine the degree of it. This great abuse was effectually removed in all protestant churches at the reformation.

Among the catholics the respect for relics still continues, though, with the general decrease of superstition, this must have abated in some measure. The Holy Land is still a great mart for these commodities. Haselquist says, that the inhabitants of Bethlehem chiefly live by them, making models of the holy sepulchre, crosses, &c. Of these there was so large a stock in Jerusalem, that the procurator told him he had to the amount of fifteen thousand piastres in the magazine of the convent. An incredible quantity of them, he says, goes yearly to the Roman Catholic countries in Europe, but most to Spain and Portugal. Many are bought by the Turks, who come yearly for these commodities.

#### SECTION IV.

##### OF THE RESPECT PAID TO THE VIRGIN MARY.

As our Savior became the object of worship before any other man, so his mother soon began to be considered with a singular respect, and to engross much of the devotion of the Christian world.

It is remarkable that no particular compliment is paid her in the gospel, except what was said by the angel; *henceforth all generations shall call thee blessed*. She is spoken of as a pious woman, was present amongst others at the crucifixion, and was committed to the care of John by our Lord. But though he thus manifested a filial respect and love, his remarks on various occasions show that he considered her, in his capacity of Messiah, only as another person or disciple. John ii. 4. Matt. xii. 48, 49. After the ascension of Jesus, her name is mentioned only once, as one of those who were assembled with the Apostles.—Acts i. 14. Where or how she lived and died we have no knowledge afterwards. Upon how narrow a foundation then does the divine honor and worship that has been paid her, rest?

The first sign of a superstitious respect for her appeared in the time of Epiphanius, when some women offered to him cakes, called *collyrides*, and were hence called themselves Collyridians. This, he terms *a heresy of the women*. It would seem that prayers then began to be offered her, a custom which he rejects with indignation. Athanasius has among his writings a long address to the virgin Mary, but it partakes more of the nature of an apostrophe, than a prayer.

Peter Gnapheus, bishop of Antioch, in the fifth century, was the first who introduced the worship of Mary, appointing her name to be called upon in the prayers of the church. Already in the fourth century there was a controversy in Arabia in respect to her, whether, after Jesus was born, she lived with her husband Joseph as his wife, or not. Some then worshipped her as a goddess, made libations, sacrifices, and oblations, to appease her anger and seek her favor. For the times were ripe for the most absurd superstitions. Elsewhere the above question was discussed, and it was deemed of such moment, that in 389 the council of Capua condemned Bonosus, a bishop of Macedonia, for maintaining that Mary was not always a virgin. The doctrine of original sin having been broached, it was doubted whether she, as well as her son, might not have been exempt from it.

After the deification and worship of Christ were established, her honors advanced proportionably, and she was called *the mother of God*—a favorite title with Apollinaris and his sect, but violently opposed by Nestorius. But in the third

council of Ephesus, he was condemned, and it was decreed that she should be called by that epithet. From this time she was more honored than ever.

#### THE VIRGIN MARY WORSHIPPED.

As the veneration for saints and martyrs, and their images and relics increased, respect for the virgin Mary kept even pace with it. Such particular attention was paid her that both the Son and Father were with many entirely overlooked. Prayers of this sort were offered her: "Mary, the mother of grace, the mother of mercy, do thou defend us from our enemies, and receive us in the hour of death: pardon the guilty, give light to the blind, by the right of a mother command our Redeemer." One of the greatest doctors declared, that all things that are God's are the virgin Mary's; because she is both the spouse and the mother of God. The steps by which this height of idolatry were gained, were however gradual.

Peter Fullo, a monk of Constantinople, introduced the name of the virgin Mary into the public prayers about the year 480. Justinian, giving thanks for his victories, prayed thus—"we ask this also by the prayers of the holy and glorified Mary, mother of God, and always a virgin." The feast of the heathen goddess Proserpine, celebrated with burning tapers, in the beginning of February, was transferred by pope Vigilius about 536 to the virgin Mary, and kept in her honor. It was called the feast of *Purification*, and also *Candlemas*, from the lights used on the occasion. Also before this time festivals had been instituted in commemoration of the *meeting* of Simeon and Mary in the temple, and his taking Jesus in his arms; and of the *immaculate conception*. About the ninth century, the festival of the *assumption* was established in commemoration of Mary being received, as was supposed, directly into heaven after her death. In the tenth century, these superstitions gained new accessions. What was called the *lesser office*, and the *rosary* and *crown* then came into favor and use. Masses were celebrated and flesh was abstained from on Saturdays in her honor. The festival of the *immaculate conception* was grounded on the doctrine that she was born without original sin—a doctrine debated warmly for three hundred years, and not regularly decided upon to this day amongst different sects of the Catholics. The Dominicans held the

doctrine, the Franciscans or Jacobins rejected it. At one period, Spain was perfectly in a flame about it, of which the very sign posts of this day bear witness. For travellers say, that, in going from Barcelona to Granada, to the name of the virgin Mary is always added these words, *sin peccado concebida* (conceived without sin).

The devotion paid to the Virgin has very little, if at all, diminished in catholic countries since the Reformation, as is evident from the accounts of travellers and the services of the churches.

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## PART V.

### THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE DEAD.

THE Jews held that there was a place below the earth, which they called *Paradise*, where the souls of good men remained; and they distinguished this from the *upper Paradise*, where they were to be after the resurrection. The Christians borrowed their opinion from the Jews, and supposed that Hades, or the place of souls, was divided into two mansions, in one of which the wicked were in grief and torment, and in the other the godly were in joy and happiness, both of them expecting the general resurrection.

Into this general receptacle of souls, it was the opinion of the early Fathers, that Christ descended to preach: as it was supposed that these were *the spirits in prison*, 1 Peter iii. 19. What effect his preaching had was a matter of controversy, some saying that he went only to the mansion of the wicked, but wrought such a change upon them as to introduce them into the other mansion among the godly; others contending that he emptied the whole of this subterranean region, or *limbus patrum*, and carried all the souls with him to heaven. The article concerning *the descent of Christ into hell*, in what we call the *Apostles' creed*, was not mentioned by any writer before Ruffinus. At first, also, the expression was *katakthonia, subterranean*, but in the creed of Athanasius, made in the sixth or seventh century, it was changed into *Hades*, which seems to have been put for *burial*, there being no other word expressing the burial of Christ in that creed. But in process of time,

the word *Hades* began to be applied to the mansion of wicked souls; some of the Fathers supposing it to be in the centre of the earth, others under the earth, and some being uncertain about its situation.

The high opinion that soon began to be entertained of the heroism and merits of the martyrs, led christians to suppose that a preference would be given to their souls after death. For while the souls of ordinary christians were to wait their doom in some intermediate state, or to pass to their final bliss through a purgation of fire, it came to be the general belief that martyrs were admitted to the immediate presence of God, and of Christ, the fire of martyrdom having purged away all their sins at once.

It was the opinion of most of the early Fathers that the world was to be destroyed by fire; and also that all men were to pass through this fire, that the good would be purified by it, and the wicked consumed. The former part of this doctrine they might learn from the apostle Peter; but it does not clearly appear whence they derived the latter part of it. It is evident, however, that they had no proper idea of the eternity of hell torments. And it was the opinion of Origen, and after him of Gregory Nazianzen, and probably of others of the Fathers, that the wicked, after being thus punished according to their deserts, would come out purified, and obtain mercy. Ambrose thought that the wicked would remain in this fire, which was to consume the world, but how long does not appear. Hilary maintained, that after the day of judgment all must pass through the fire, even the virgin Mary herself, in order to purify them from from their sins. This opinion was the first idea of a doctrine of *Purgatory*, which was so great a source of gain to the monks and priests in after ages.

Augustine speaks very doubtfully with respect to the dead. He sometimes seems very positive for *two states* only; but as he asserted the last probatory fire, so he seems to have thought that good souls might suffer from grief in their sequestered state before the last day, on account of some of their past sins, and that they might rise to their proper consummation by degrees. See his sentiments on this subject pretty much at large in his *first question to Dulcidius*; where he inclines to think that they who have faith in Christ, but love the world too much, will be saved *but so as by fire*; whereas they who, though they profess faith in

Christ, yet neglect good works, will suffer eternally. In his treatise *De Civitate Dei*, he does not seem disposed to controvert the opinion of those who say that all would be saved at last, through the intercession of the saints.

The Gnostics are said to have maintained that the greatest part of mankind would be *annihilated* at the day of judgment, which was probably the same thing that was meant by those who said that they would be *consumed* in the fire that was to destroy the world.

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We have now seen something like the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory started, but it is so unlike that doctrine in its present form, that we can hardly imagine that it could ever serve as a foundation for it. The ancient Fathers only thought that when this world would be destroyed by fire, that fire would purify the good, and destroy the wicked. Whereas, this purgatory is something that is supposed to take place immediately after death, to affect the soul only, and to terminate sooner or later, according to circumstances, especially the pains that are taken in favor of the dead, by the masses and other good offices of the living, as well as by their own benefactions and bequests for religious uses before their death.

On the whole, therefore, it looks as if this doctrine of purgatory had been built upon some other ground; and nothing is so likely to furnish a groundwork for it, as the notions of the heathens concerning the state of souls in the regions below, which were always supposed capable of being brought back again. Also the popular opinions of the northern nations concerning the state of souls after death were, in many cases, similar to those of the Greeks and Romans; and such opinions as these would not easily quit their hold of the common people on their conversion to christianity; and being held together with the opinion of the Fathers above mentioned, the present doctrine of purgatory might, in time, be the produce of both.

It is generally said that the foundation of the present doctrine was laid by Gregory the Great, who lived in the sixth century, about 160 years after Augustine.

Narrow as the foundation was, the monks were very industrious in building upon it, and about the tenth century the present system seems to have been pretty well complet-

ed. For then not even the best of men were supposed to be exempted from the fire of purgatory; and it was generally represented as not less severe than that of hell itself. But then souls might always be delivered from it by the prayers and masses of the living, which prayers and masses might always be had upon certain pecuniary considerations; and the fables and fictitious miracles that were propagated to secure the belief of this new kind of future state, were innumerable.

The present doctrine of the church of Rome on the subject of purgatory is, that every man is liable both to temporal and eternal punishment for his sins; that God, on account of the death and intercession of Christ, does indeed pardon sin as to its eternal punishment; but that the sinner is still liable to temporal punishment, which he must expiate by acts of penance and sorrow in this world, together with such other sufferings as God shall think fit to lay upon him. But if he does not expiate these in his life, there is a state of sufferings and misery in the next world, where the soul is to bear the temporal punishment of its sin, which may continue longer or shorter till the day of judgment; and to the shortening of this punishment, prayers and works of supererogation here on earth, or the intercessions of the saints in heaven, but above all things, the sacrifice of the mass, are of great efficacy. This is the doctrine of the church of Rome, as asserted in the councils of Florence, and of Trent.

Before this time, the opinions concerning purgatory were exceedingly various, with respect to the place of purgatory, the nature of the pains of it, and indeed every thing belonging to it. Eckius maintained that it was in the bottom of the sea. Others would have it to be in mount Etna, Vesuvius, or some other burning mountain. Sir Thomas Moore says, that the punishment will be only by fire, but Fisher, his fellow sufferer, by fire and water. Loricinus says neither by fire nor water, but by the violent convulsions of hope and fear. Fisher maintained that the executioners would be the holy angels, but Sir Thomas Moore thought they would be the devils. Some again thought that only *venial* sins are expiated in purgatory, but others that *mortal* sins are expiated there likewise. Dennis, the Carthusian, thought that the pains of purgatory would continue to the end of the world, but Dominicus a Soto limited it to ten



years, and others made the time to depend on the number of masses, &c. that should be said on their behalf, or on the will of the pope. Thomas Aquinas, as has been seen above makes the pains of purgatory to be as violent as those of hell; whereas, the Rhemists say that souls are not in a bad condition there, and Durandus, holding a middle opinion gives them some intermission from their pains on Sunday and holidays. Bede tells a long story of a Northumberland man, who, after he died, returned to life again, and said that he had passed through the middle of a long and large valley, which had two lakes in it, in one of which souls were tormented with heat, and in the other with cold; and that when a soul had been so long in the hot lake that it could endure no longer, it would leap into the cold one and when that became intolerable, it would leap back again. This uncertainty was so great, that the whole doctrine must have been discredited, if it had not been for the profits which the popes, the priests, and the friars, made of it.

The living being, by means of this doctrine of purgatory deeply interested in the fate of the dead, and having the very much at their mercy, the mistaken compassion and piety of many persons, could not fail to be excited in their favor. Before the tenth century, it had been customary in many places, to put up prayers on certain days for the souls that were confined in purgatory, but these were made each religious society for its own members and friends; but in this century a festival was instituted by Odilo, bishop of Clugny, in remembrance of *all departed souls*, and it was added to the Latin calendar towards the conclusion of the tenth century.

The Greeks, though in most respects they had superstitions similar to those of the Latins, yet they never adopted their notions concerning purgatory.

According to the doctrine of purgatory, the moment that any soul is released from that place, it is admitted into heaven, to the presence of God and of Christ, and made as happy as it can be in an unembodied state, which was contrary to the opinion of the early Fathers, viz: that all souls continued in *Hades*, until the resurrection, or at most that exception was made in favor of the martyrs.

It may just deserve to be mentioned, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the same body, was questioned by Constantine, bishop of Tarsus, in the sixth century; who, in opposition

to Philoponus, a philosopher of Alexandria, (who had asserted that both the form and the matter of the body would be restored at the resurrection) maintained that the *form* would remain, but that the *matter* would be changed.

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So general was the belief of a purgatory in this western part of the world, that Wickliffe could not entirely shake it off. The ancient Waldenses, however, who separated from the church of Rome before the doctrine of purgatory had got established, never admitted it; and presently after the reformation by Luther, we find it abandoned by all who left the church of Rome without exception, so that this doctrine is now peculiar to that church.

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## PART VI.

### THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS RELATING TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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#### THE INTRODUCTION.

THERE is nothing in the whole history that I have undertaken to write, so extraordinary as the abuses that have been introduced into the rite of the *Lord's Supper*. Nothing can be imagined more simple in its original institution, or less liable to misapprehension or abuse; and yet, in no instance whatever, has the depravation of the original doctrine and custom proceeded to a greater height, or had more serious consequences.

In allusion, perhaps, to the festival of the passover, our Lord appointed his disciples to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him; informing them that the bread represented his body, which was about to be broken, and the wine his blood, which was about to be shed for them; and we are informed by the apostle Paul, that this rite is to continue in the christian church till our Lord's second coming. Farther than this we are not informed in the New Testament. We only find that the custom was certainly kept up, and that the christians of the primitive times probably concluded the public worship of every Lord's day, with the celebration of it. As the rite was peculiar to christians,

the celebration of it, was of course, in common with joining habitually in the public worship of christians, an open declaration of a man's being a christian, and more so indeed, than any other visible circumstance; because other persons might occasionally attend the public worship of christians, without bearing any proper part in it themselves.

## SECTION I.

### THE HISTORY OF THE EUCHARIST TILL THE TIME OF AUGUSTINE.

The first new idea which was superadded to the original notion of the Lord's supper, was that of its being a *sacrament*, or an oath to be true to a leader. For the word *sacrament* is not to be found in the scriptures, but was afterwards borrowed from the Latin tongue, in which it signifies the oath which a Roman soldier took to his general.

The next idea which was added to the primitive notion of the Lord's supper was of a much more alarming nature, and had a long train of the worst consequences. This was the considering of this institution as a *mystery*. And, indeed, the christians affected very early to call this rite, one of the *mysteries of our holy religion*. By the term *mystery* was meant, originally, the more secret parts of the heathen worship, to which select persons only were admitted, and those under an oath of secrecy. Those mysteries were also called *initiations*; those who were initiated were supposed to be pure and holy, while those who were not initiated were considered as impure and profane.

Hence those who did not partake of the ordinance, were, in the course of time, excluded from its celebration, in imitation of the heathen custom. It is probable that this practice did not arise till the middle of the third century. In the fourth century it was usual to call the eucharist a *tremendous mystery*, a *dreadful solemnity*, and *terrible to angels*.

Another new idea annexed to the eucharist was that of its being a *sacrifice*; and this, too, was in compliance with the prejudices of the Jews and heathens, who in the early ages used to reproach the christians with having no sacrifices or oblations in their religion. We soon find, however, that this language was adopted by them, and applied to the Lord's supper. This language is particularly used by Cy-

prian, and in general the Lord's supper was called the *eucharistical sacrifice*, though, in fact, they only considered it as a *memorial* of the sacrifice of Christ or of his death upon the cross.

Again, both Baptism and the Lord's Supper began in early times to be regarded as doing more than to influence religiously the mind and heart in the natural way. They were esteemed as a kind of charm. Justin Martyr and Irenæus thought that there was such a sanctification of the elements, that there was a *divine virtue* in them. This opened the door to endless superstitions. Hence very early, baptism and the Lord's supper were esteemed *necessary to salvation*, or as *saving ordinances*.

It is too early to look for the notion of the transmutation of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ, but we find even in this early age language so highly figurative (calling the symbols by the name of the things represented by them) as very much contributed to produce this opinion in after ages.

"We do not consider," says Justin Martyr, "this bread and wine as common bread and wine. For the evangelists teach us that Jesus Christ took bread, and said, *this is my body*. He also took the wine and said, *this is my blood*." Tertullian, however, says, that by the words, *this is my body*, we are to understand the *figure* of my body.

The language of Cyril of Jerusalem to the young communicants is very strong: "Since Christ has said, *this is my body*; who can deny it? Since he has said, *this is my blood*, who can say it is not so?" He tells his pupils they must not judge of this by their senses, but by faith.

As a natural consequence of the superstitious awe with which the elements were viewed, many feared to partake of them. In the time of Chrysostom, so many abstained from this part of the service, that he was obliged to reprove them for it with great severity; and various methods were taken to engage them to attend it.

The bread and wine, being esteemed in some sense as the body and blood of Christ, were held in awful reverence. They shed a sanctity also upon every thing that was connected with them. The cloth, which covered the bread, was called *the cloth of the body*, and held sacred. The table Jerome calls a *mystical table*, and recommends a religious veneration to be paid to the utensils and furniture, be-

longing to it. In the fourth century, it was thought wrong to commit the blood of Christ to so frail a thing as glass. The elements were given to the sick for medicinal purposes. They were carried about the person as a means of preservation in journeys, and upon voyages. They were held up to the public view, before they were distributed, that they might be contemplated with religious respect. And sometimes the sacramental bread was buried with the dead.

The manner of administering the ordinance received corresponding attention. In the primitive times, all the faithful received the eucharist every Lord's day. Youth and children, and indeed infants, communed, which is still the custom in the Eastern churches, but it was abolished in the West shortly before the Reformation. The catechumens or uninitiated, were dismissed after the common service with the words *Ite Missa est*; whence by corruption we have the English word *Mass*; and the Lord's supper was then administered to the initiated. In the time of Tertullian, the celebration took place in the morning, and it was thought wrong to eat any thing before they partook of the elements. It was generally believed by the ancients that the wine was mixed with water in the Savior's own administration of the eucharist, and therefore they did the same. Some used water entirely, and were hence called Aquarians. The bread and wine being thus superstitiously guarded, it became a question of some moment, at what precise instant they were changed into the veritable body and blood of Christ; and some decided it was at the prayer of others at the pronouncing of the words, *this is my body*. The custom of using lights at this service began in the East soon after Gr. Nazianzen, and in the fifth century candles were employed. A set form was used to bless the lights. The long prayer which preceded the ordinance gave it the name of *Eucharist*. Before communion, a kiss of peace was given, men kissing men, and women women. They also used to kiss the hand of the priest. Deacons anciently administered the elements, but it afterwards fell to the lot of the priests. Women served in such places as late as the tenth century. In the time of Jerome the bread was kissed. Among the Greeks, it was directed that the hand of the deacon, serving the elements, should be kissed. The hand itself was to be held in the form

a cross. Cyril of Jerusalem exhorted his communicants to receive the bread in the hollow of the hand, to support the right hand by the left, and beware of dropping the crumbs on the ground. The wine was to be taken with the body a little bowed, as a token of veneration. But it is needless to note the progress of superstition in all these minute observances.

The *Agapes* or love-feasts, were entertainments, to which every person brought what he thought proper, and at which all Christians eat in common, before their celebration of the Lord's supper, or when that was thought improper, after it. This custom was forbidden by the council of Laodicea in 360.

We have thus far seen how the pagan notion of *mysteries*, together with that of a *sanctifying power* in the elements themselves, contributed to introduce a long train of superstitious usages into the Christian church, in relation to one of its simple ordinances.

## SECTION II.

### THE HISTORY OF THE EUCHARIST FROM THE TIME OF AUGUSTINE TO THAT OF PASCHASIUS.

In this period, a considerable advance was made towards the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, which was afterwards established in the Western church, but which was extensively promoted in the East first. Anastasius, a monk of Mount Sinai, said in a treatise, that the elements of the Lord's supper were the true body and blood of Christ; for that when Christ instituted the eucharist, he did not say, this is the *type* or *antitype* of my body, but *my body*. John Damascenus, another celebrated monk of the East, and influential writer, declared that "Jesus had joined to the bread and wine his own divinity, and made them to be his body and blood." He illustrated it thus: "Isaiah saw a *lighted coal*; now a lighted coal is not mere wood, but wood joined to fire; so the bread of the sacrament is not mere bread, but bread joined to the divinity; and the body united to the divinity is not one and the same nature, but the nature of the body is one, and that of the divinity united to it another." From his day to ours, it has been the faith of the Greek church, that the sacrament after consecration, was no image, but properly Christ's body and blood.

In the West, Christ was believed to be, in some extraor-

dinary manner, *present* with the elements, but in *what manner*, they had not perhaps any distinct idea.

The eucharistical elements being considered so peculiarly sacred, it was natural to adopt methods to prevent the loss or waste of them. One was to take the bread dipped in the consecrated wine. The Armenians still receive the eucharist in this way, and the Muscovites take the bread and wine together in a spoon. Amongst other superstitions of that time, we find that sometimes the consecrated wine was mixed with ink, in order to sign writings of a peculiarly solemn nature.

In the early days of Christianity, the celebration of the Lord's supper was a part of the public worship, in which all the congregation of the faithful joined, but in the present Roman Catholic church the priest alone communicates in general, while the people are mere spectators, and join in no part of the service except the prayers. This kind of *mass* appears first in history about 700. It was supposed that this service would avail for the pardon of sin, and the redemption of souls out of purgatory. For its performance, large sums of money were given and bequeathed to the priests, yielding them immense riches. Nor did the monks, when allowed by Pope Gregory to perform the office of priests, counteract the abuse, but enlarged it. They originated *private chapels*, and multiplied altars in churches, so that several masses might be celebrated at the same time. To induce the common people to continue their offerings after they ceased to communicate, a substitute for the real communion was given them, something of a much less awful nature, which was called *hallowed bread*. The priests performed the sacramental service in a suppressed tone of voice.

The liturgy, called *the canon of the mass*, now used in the Roman Catholic church, was chiefly composed by Gregory the Great, who introduced into it many pompous ceremonies.

As the supper was now deemed a *proper sacrifice*, the table on which it was offered came naturally to be called an *altar*. And as the Jews and pagans consecrated their altars, the christians must do the same. Stone was the only material allowed for their erection. To their due consecration, it finally became necessary that there should be relics in them. Bede mentions *portable altars*. *Incense*, as wel

as lights, in conformity to heathen customs, was burnt at the Lord's Supper. To prevent loss, and to preclude the necessity of breaking it, the bread was made in the shape of small round cakes, or *wafers*, as the technical phrase is. For the ancient *kiss of peace*, Leo III. substituted, in the ninth century, the kissing of a plate of silver or copper, with the figure of the cross upon it, or the relic of some saint, after the consecration of the elements. Pope Vigilius ordered in 536 that those who celebrated *mass* should *face the East*, as that quarter of the compass was held particularly sacred, as had been the case always among the heathens. At first, the bread was taken in the naked hand, but the custom arose of receiving it in vessels of gold, or silver.—Glass was considered too brittle for so high an office. What to do with the remainder after communion, was a point about which the busy superstition of the times employed itself. Some churches burnt what remained. At Constantinople, it was eaten by young scholars, sent from the school for that purpose. It was decreed that none of the sacred elements should be left till the next day.

One would imagine that the ridiculous abuses of this simple and beautiful ordinance had reached their acme, but we shall witness in the next period those of a greater magnitude, and which are, notwithstanding the greater light of the present day, still unreformed.

### SECTION III.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE EUCHARIST, FROM THE TIME OF PASCHASIUS TO THE REFORMATION.

THE succeeding era is the most important one in the history of this ordinance. We have seen how the elements gained, in ages of darkness, increasing *sacredness and solemnity*, until at last the privilege of communicating was restricted almost solely to the priests and monks, except on the great festivals, and especially that of Easter. There was a confused notion that the bread and wine were, in some sense or other, *the body and blood of Christ*, and therefore that Christ himself was present in them. The precise manner was not settled, until Paschasius Radbert, a monk of the Benedictine order, and afterwards Abbot of Corbie in France, undertook to explain it in a treatise on the subject, published in the year 818. He maintained that the bread



and were because the real body and blood of Christ  
 abounded only, that had been with it. Many opinions  
 sprung from the text. "It is no other flesh," and  
 "flesh that which was made of the Virgin Mary, which  
 lived upon the cross, and which was raised from the  
 dead, descended for the support of his holy church and  
 sacrament solely, but upon a supernatural reason—a  
 sort of proof far more persuasive in those days than in  
 seasons. It may be related as a good specimen of the  
 opinions of those times.

A priest whose name was Paschasius, officiating in the  
 of St. Vincent, wished out of love and not indolence,  
 the body of Jesus Christ, and having upon his altar  
 asked if God he knew to see the nature of the body  
 was Christ, in this mystery, and in kind in his last  
 form of that little child which the Virgin had borne  
 him; when an angel came to him, "Get thee hence  
 now at the infant which that holy woman had borne  
 he a witness in his corporeal nature." The priest, being  
 that being quite terrified, he looked up, and saw  
 above the altar that Someone had been in his arms, in  
 arms, and him he might not only see, but touch the  
 and that accordingly he took him and pressed the  
 the child to his own, and after embracing him, he  
 he kissed the God, joining his lips to the lips of  
 Christ. After that he repeated the beautiful words  
 God upon the altar, praying to God that he might  
 his former figure, and that he had scarcely finished  
 prayer, when rising from the ground, he found the  
 Jesus Christ was restored to its former figure, as he  
 requested.

The opinion of Paschasius was, however, novel  
 strange, and met with a vigorous opposition. The  
 Emperor, Charles the Bald, was much offended at it, and  
 employed two of the ablest writers of the day, Ratramnus  
 John Scotus, to investigate and refute it. In the eleventh  
 century, Berenger wrote earnestly against the doctrine  
 the real presence, but he was condemned by several  
 councils, and obliged to sign a recantation of his opinions,  
 though he died in the belief of it. The Albigenses rejected  
 the doctrine, and in 1155, Arnold of Brescia was banished  
 from Rome for denying it, and for declaiming against the  
 of Rome in general. By a decree of Innocent III.

council of Lateran, in 1215, this doctrine was made an article of faith, and the term *Transubstantiation*, first used by Stephen, bishop of Autun, in the preceding century, was applied to it.

Still the doctrine was not without its difficulties. For it was natural to inquire, how it was that the elements, being changed into flesh and blood, still retained all the properties of bread and wine. To get through this embarrassment, Innocent III. asserted that the bread retained a certain *pancity*, and the wine a certain *vineity*. Other doubts arose, which it is easy to imagine, and needless to recite. But the huge superstition of the age swallowed them all without difficulty, and common sense received a long farewell. Said Guimond, an advocate of the doctrine against Berenger, "every separate part of the eucharist is the whole body of Christ. It is given entire to all the faithful. They all receive it equally. Though it should be celebrated a thousand times at once, it is the same indivisible body of Christ. It is only to *sense* that a single part of the host appears less than the whole, but our senses often deceive us. It is acknowledged that there is a difficulty in *comprehending* this, but there is no difficulty in *believing* it." He farther says, that in the dispute "nothing less is depending than eternal life."

The doctrine of transubstantiation was the cause of a great variety of new ceremonies and institutions in the church of Rome. Hence, among other things, those rich and splendid receptacles which were formed for the residence of God, under this new shape, and the lamps and other precious ornaments that were designed to beautify this habitation of the Deity; and hence the custom of carrying about this divine bread in solemn pomp, through the public streets, when it is to be administered to sick and dying persons, with many other ceremonies of the like nature. But what crowns the whole was the *festival of the holy sacrament*.

This was an institution of Urban IV. in 1264, on the pretended revelation of one Juliana, a woman of Liege, who said that it was showed her from heaven, that this particular festival day of the holy eucharist, had always been in the councils of the sovereign Trinity; but that now the time of revealing it to men was come. This festival is attended with a procession in which the host is carried in great

pomp and magnificence. No less a person than Thomas Aquinas composed the office for this great solemnity.

In the eastern church, *the elevation of the host* was first practised towards the end of the sixth century, representing the elevation of Christ upon the cross. In the western church, there is no mention of it before the eleventh century, and no adoration was required till the thirteenth, when at the ringing of a bell, the people were to fall down on their knees, and adore the consecrated host. For four or five hundred years, what are called *dry masses* (or the ceremony of the mass without the consecration of the elements) were much used in the church of Rome. They are only employed now on Good Fridays, and during storms at sea. In order to save the elements from loss or abuse, *bread only* was given to the laity in the service of communion; and the doctrine of transubstantiation made this custom easy, for if the consecrated bread was the *whole* body of Christ, as was now agreed, then it contained the blood, or wine, of course, and therefore that element was superfluous. Where wine was also used, the communicants sucked it through quills, or silver pipes, attached to the chalices, to prevent spilling it. The high respect for the eucharist led to the usage of receiving it *kneeling* instead of *standing*, which is still retained in the church of Rome and of England. A fierce debate arose between the Greek and Latin churches on the question whether *leavened* or *unleavened* bread was to be used at the Lord's supper. Finally, the Latins conformed to the example of the Greeks, and made use only of unleavened bread, which could have been the only kind our Savior employed at the institution of the ordinance.

Considering the many gross abuses which prevailed with respect to the Lord's supper after the time of Paschasius, it is no wonder that we meet with some persons who laid it aside altogether. This was the case with the *Paulicians* in the ninth century, who considered both baptism and the Lord's supper as something figurative and parabolical. This was also the case with some persons in France, in the beginning of the eleventh century, and they were condemned at the synod of Orleans, and again at Arras in 1025. Also in the twelfth century, one Tanchelin persuaded the people of Antwerp, and other persons in Flanders, that receiving the Lord's supper was not necessary to salvation.

But indeed this he might do, without wishing them to omit the celebration of it altogether.

As little can we wonder that unbelievers should take advantage of such a doctrine as this, to treat the christian religion with contempt. Averroes, the great freethinker of his age, said that Judaism was the religion of children, and Mahometanism that of hogs; but he knew no sect so foolish and absurd as that of the christians, who adored what they eat.

#### SECTION IV.

##### OF THE RECOVERY OF THE GENUINE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As the ordinance had been wofully and totally corrupted from its first simple design, it was with great difficulty rectified. Indeed, it is hardly restored at the present day. The reformers, in general, were haunted by an indefinable awe with respect to the eucharist. Wickliffe was late in settling his opinions on the subject, and contradicts himself in different parts of his writings. John Huss believed the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the real presence. Luther rejected transubstantiation, but retained a belief in the real presence, since he held that the body of Christ might be omnipresent, as well as his divinity. To distinguish his doctrine from that of the papists, he called it *consubstantiation*, and illustrated it thus: a red hot iron contains two distinct substances, the *iron* and the *fire* united, so is the body of Christ joined with the bread in the eucharist. Carolstadt, Luther's colleague, and Zuinglius, the great Swiss reformer, maintained that the bread and wine were no other than *signs and symbols*, designed to excite in the minds of Christians the remembrance of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of the benefits which arise from them. Socinus, likewise, considered it as a commemoration of the death of Christ. Calvin, much less rational, believed that a certain divine efficacy or virtue was communicated by Christ, together with the bread and wine. It was owing to this secret awe and leaven of superstition, that the Catholics had quite the advantage over the Protestants in their controversy on this subject, having the prejudices of the people, and also those of their adversaries, on their side.

Among the different Protestant sects, different notions

and practices are prevalent in relation to this rite. The church of England, the kirk of Scotland, the Assembly's Catechism, hold forth the idea that some peculiar *divine virtue* is imparted in the eucharistical elements, when they are properly received, and therefore more preparation is enjoined for receiving this ordinance, than for attending public worship in general. This was the belief of Calvin. Among the English dissenters, before admission to the communion, a man is required to give an account of his *experience* in religion, or the miraculous *work of grace* upon his soul, so as to afford reason to believe that he is one of the *elect* and will not fall away, before he can be allowed to partake of the eucharist. In accordance with the same belief, *days of preparation* for receiving the supper are set apart; and no person is thought to be qualified to administer the ordinance, unless he has been regularly ordained.

It can also be from nothing but the remains of superstition, that the number of communicants, even among the most liberal of the Dissenters, is very small, seldom exceeding one in ten of the congregation; and very few as yet bring their children to communion. On this subject Mr Pierce wrote a very valuable tract, which has led many to think favorably of the practice, as the only effectual method of securing the attendance of Christians in general, when they are grown up.

I would only advise the deferring of communion till the children be of a proper age to be brought to attend other parts of public worship, and till they can be made to join in the celebration with decency, so as to give no offence to others. This being a part of public worship, there cannot, I think, be any reason for making them communicate at an earlier age; and to make them do it at any period before it be properly an act of their own, will equally secure their attendance afterwards, which is the object to be aimed at. It is because there has been no particular fixed time for *beginning* to communicate, that has been the reason of its being so generally neglected as it has been with us. I flatter myself, however, that in due time, we shall think rationally on this, as well as on other subjects relating to Christianity, and that our practice will correspond with our sentiments.

## PART VI.

## THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS RELATING TO BAPTISM.

## THE INTRODUCTION.

THE rite of *baptism* was perhaps first practised by John, whose commission from God, was to *baptize unto repentance* all who should profess themselves to be his disciples. Our Savior himself, was baptized, and probably all the apostles, who, by his directions, baptized others, even in his life time; and in his giving his commission to them, he commanded them to *baptize* as well as *disciple* all nations. Accordingly we find, in the book of Acts, that all who were converted to Christianity, Jews as well as Gentiles, were received into the Christian church by baptism.

As this rite is usually called the *baptism of repentance*, it was probably intended to represent the purity of heart and life which was required of all who professed themselves to be Christians; and therefore a declaration of faith in Christ, and also of repentance, was always made by those who presented themselves to be baptized, at least if it was required of them. Nothing more, therefore, seems to have been meant by baptism originally, than a solemn declaration of a man's being a Christian, and of his resolution to live as becomes one; and very far was it from being imagined, that there was any peculiar virtue in the rite itself. It was considered as laying a man under obligation to a virtuous and holy life, as the profession of Christianity necessarily does, but not of itself making any person holy.

It is certain, that in very early times, there is no particular mention made of any person being baptized by *sprinkling* only, or a partial application of water to the body; but as on the other hand, the dipping of the whole body is not expressly prescribed, and the *moral emblem* is the same, viz. that of *cleanness* or *purity*, produced by the use of water, we seem to be at liberty to apply the water either to the whole body, or to a part of it, as circumstances shall make it convenient. The Greek word (*baptizo*) certainly does not always imply a dipping of the whole body in water. For it is applied to that kind of washing which the Pharisees required before eating. See Luke xi. 38. Mark

vii. 4. We read in the same evangelist of the baptis only of cups, pots, and brazen vessels, but also of cou Also, as in the Old Testament we often read of *sprin* with water, as Num. xix. 13. 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ar referred to in the New, Heb. ix. 19. where we read, *Moses sprinkled both the book of the Law, and all the pe* I think it most probable, that when great numbers baptized at the same time, the water was applied i manner, the practice being sufficiently familiar to Je

In the three first centuries it was not uncommon tize persons at the hour of death, and in this case the tainly did not dip the whole body. It is said, inde some, that the Eunomians made this change in the baptism; thinking it indecent to plunge persons over in water, and especially naked; and that they the only uncovered them as far as the breast, and then p the water upon their heads. But as the Eunomians a branch of the Arians, it is not probable that the Cath as they were called, would adopt the custom from Besides, if the practice of *immersion* had always thought absolutely necessary to baptism, it is not pro that the Christians of that age would have ever dep from it. As superstition increased, we shall have evi enough, that they were more ready to *add* than to *dim* with respect to every thing that was of a ceremonial n

It has been much debated whether *infants* were c ered as proper subjects for baptism in the primitive cl Now, besides, that we are not able to trace the ori infant baptism, and therefore are necessarily carried into the age of the apostles for it, a controversy arose ty early in the Christian church, which would nat have led some persons to deny the antiquity of the pr if they could; and considering the state of opinion practices with respect to things of a similar nature, natural to suppose that the primitive Christians woultize infants as well as adult persons.

With respect to this subject, I cannot think that w have attended so much as they ought to have done power of a master of a family (the *patria potestas*) i East, and particularly have not considered how far hi character and profession usually affected his wife, his dren, and his servants, and indeed every thing that be ed to him. When the Ninevites repented, they made

their cattle to fast, and wear sackcloth, as well as themselves; not that they could consider their cattle as having any occasion to repent, but they did it in order to express, in a stronger manner, their own humiliation and contrition.

Another illustration of the same principle is found in the case of Abraham, who by *his own act* circumcised not only his son Ishmael, but all his slaves. It was not done for them, for they had no interest whatever in the promises made to him, but it was a necessary appendage to his own circumcision.

The same example was followed in future ages, when the Jews made converts to their religion. The master of a family not only submitted to the rite himself, but likewise saw that his household, or all that depended on him, did the same.

It was natural, therefore, for the apostles, and other Jews, on the institution of baptism, to apply it to infants, as well as to adults, as a token of the profession of christianity by the master of the family only; and this they would do without considering it as a substitute for circumcision, and succeeding in the place of it, which it is never said to do in the scriptures, though some have been led by some circumstances of resemblance in the two rites to imagine that this was the case.

Accordingly, we find in the scriptures, that the jailor, on professing his faith in Christ, was baptized, *he and all his*, Acts xvi. 33, and that Lydia was baptized, and *all her household*, ver. 15. Now it is certain that to a Jew these phrases would convey the idea of the children, at least, if not of the domestic slaves, having been baptized, as well as the head of the family. A Roman also could not have understood them to imply less than all who were subject to what was called the *patria potestas*.

It also appears to me to be very evident from ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the christian Fathers, that infant baptism was the uniform practice of the primitive christians, and continued to be so till along with other superstitious notions, they got the idea of the efficacy of baptism *as such* to wash away sins, and consequently of the peculiar safety of dying presently after they were baptized, before any fresh guilt could be contracted.

Tertullian indeed advises to defer baptism till persons be of age to be christians, on account of the hazard in which



it placed their sponsors, and because of their innocence in youth, but he no where intimates that infant baptism was not universal in his day, or that it was an *innovation*. He wished merely to prevent that disgrace which some who were admitted to baptism, brought upon their profession, and he recommends therefore that it be deferred *in all cases*, amongst others in that of infants.

Owing to the liberalizing effect of christianity upon ancient slavery, and also to the less absolute control of fathers over their children in the countries of Europe, compared with the East, it came to pass in time that slaves, and adult children were not baptized without their own consent, but neither Jews nor Romans would have made the same exception in favor of infants.

Considering how very different are the ideas and customs of these times, and these parts of the world, from those which prevailed among the Jews, when baptism was instituted, the peculiar reasons for applying it to infants have, in a great measure, ceased. But still, as the practice is of apostolical authority, it appears to me, that no innovation ought to be made in it by any power whatever; but that we ought rather to preserve those ideas which originally gave a propriety to it, especially when there is nothing unnatural in them. For my own part, I endeavor to adhere to the primitive ideas above mentioned, and therefore I consider the baptizing of my children, not as directly implying that they have any interest in it, or in the things signified by it, but as a part of my own profession of christianity, and consequently as an obligation, which, as such, I am under, to educate my children and also to instruct my servants, in the principles of the christian religion. In this view of the ordinance of baptism, infants are indirectly interested in it, whether they adhere to the profession of christianity, and thereby secure the blessings of it when they become adults, so as to think and act for themselves, or not.

Maimonides, and the earliest Jewish writers, speak of solemn baptism as a necessary attendant on circumcision, whenever any new converts were made to their religion, and also as a practice that was immemorial among them. But whether it was tacitly implied in the original institution of circumcision, or whether it had been adopted afterwards, as naturally expressive of the new converts cleansing themselves from the impurities of their former state of

nism, it was probably the custom of the Jews in the  
f our Savior.

his was the case, if the Jews did both circumcise and  
e all of their households, who were capable of it,  
was less reason for specifying the proper subjects for  
m, and we may fairly suppose that our Lord would  
expressly restricted the application of it to adult per-  
if he had intended that the prevailing custom should  
ered. Consequently, when a master of a family was  
rted to Christianity, he would, of course, be required  
size all his household, and consider himself as bound  
ruct them in the principles of the religion, which he  
sed himself.

e controversy between Augustine and Pelagius about  
al sin, was well calculated to shed light on this sub-  
the former holding that baptism was necessary to wash  
n away, the latter that it was not necessary for that  
r conducive to it. Both, however, agreed that infants  
to be baptized; they differed only about the reason  
hey should be baptized. Neither intimates but what  
stom was universal, and always had been.

stly, I am not able to interpret 1 Cor. vii. 14, *The un-  
ing husband is sanctified by the wife, or else were the  
en unclean, but now they are holy*, more naturally  
by supposing, that as by *holy*, the Jews meant *devoted  
d*, so by *a child being holy*, they meant that it had a  
to the ceremonies of their holy religion. As there-  
child born of one Jewish parent had a right to cir-  
ision, so a child born of one Christian parent had a  
to baptism. Indeed, I do not see what other *rational*  
ing can be assigned to the *holiness of a child*.

s remarkable that the Christians in Abyssinia repeat  
baptism annually, on the festival of Epiphany.

## SECTION I.

IE OPINIONS AND PRACTICES OF THE CHRISTIANS RELAT-  
ING TO BAPTISM, TILL THE REFORMATION.

E rite of Baptism was, like that of the Lord's supper,  
corrupted. But after the first centuries, there were  
aterial alterations made, though the business of *con-  
tion* grew out of it. Its chief abuses, unlike those of  
upper, were early acquired.

*Baptism* and *regeneration* were used in the second century as synonymous terms; and a *sanctifying virtue* ascribed to the water.

Tertullian says, that the Holy Spirit was always in baptism, and that the spirit of God descends upon water, like a dove. Cyprian adds, that the adorable *trinity* is ineffably in baptism. Paulinus declares, that the water conceives and contains God. Chrysostom says, the water ceases to be what it was before, and is not fit for drinking, but is proper for sanctifying; and that *christian baptism* is superior to that of John, inasmuch as his was *baptism of repentance*, and had no power to *forgive*. Augustine asserts, that the water touches the body and purifies the heart.

Superstitious practices, similar to those which follow the corruption of the eucharist, did not fail to account for this undue reverence for the water of baptism. In the fourth century, the novitiates returned from baptism, adorned with crowns and clothed with white garments, in token of victory over sin and the world. After baptism, they did not wash till the end of the week. The bodies of the baptized were wiped, lest a drop of the precious water should fall to the ground. It was believed, that a miracle was wrought on the water that was drawn on the day of Epiphany, because it was the anniversary of Christ's baptism. It was supposed that a person newly baptized was cleared from all sin, many deferred baptism till near the close of life. Constantine, the Great, was not baptized till he lay at the last gasp, and in this he was followed by his son Constantius. In such cases, of course *immersion* was not the subject of the question. In some places, rather than to omit baptism entirely, it was usual to baptize those who were already dead.

After the age of Justin Martyr, many additions were made to the rite. The baptized person received milk and honey, and abstained from washing the remainder of the body. The *Unction*, *imposition of hands*, and *signing with the cross*, were devised and great efficacy attributed to them. The ceremonies of *exorcism* and *adjuration*, practised, to drive evil spirits from the persons to be baptized. Salt, as a symbol of purity and wisdom, was used, and candles were lighted. By a decree of the council of Laodicea in 364, *two anointings* were prescribed.

with simple oil before baptism, the other with ointment after the ceremony. This latter unction afterwards fell to the bishops and laid the foundation for a distinct sacrament, called *confirmation*.

In relation to the performance of the rite, we learn that originally only the bishop, or his priest by permission, administered baptism. But in the time of Tertullian, laymen could baptize in cases of emergency. When the church was enlarged, the business of baptizing devolved on the priests and country bishops, and the bishops of great sees only *confirmed* afterwards. A controversy arose in the time of Cyprian in relation to the validity of baptism, as administered by heretics. A synod at Carthage, convened by him, decreed that no baptism was valid out of the catholic church, and therefore that those who had been heretics should be re-baptized.\* But Stephen, Bishop of Rome, disapproved of the decision, and his opinion became prevalent in that church.

With a fondness for the pompous rites and secret ceremonies of the pagans, the christians early sought for some *mysteries* in their institutions, and converted *baptism* and the *Lord's supper* to that use. They allowed none but the initiated to be present at the *eucharist*. And as those who were admitted to the heathen mysteries had certain *signs* or *symbols* of recognition, so the christians made the Apostles' creed and the Lord's prayer serve that purpose, though it is hard to understand how the latter, being openly published in the Gospels, could be employed as a secret watchword.

In the second century baptism was performed publicly only twice in the year, viz: on Easter and Whitsunday. In the same age *sponsors* or *godfathers* were introduced to answer for adult persons, though they were afterwards admitted in the baptism of infants. This, Mr Daille says, was not done till the fourth century.

It should seem from the Acts of the apostles, that it was sufficient to the ceremony of baptism, to say *I baptize thee in the name of Jesus Christ*. But we soon find that the

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\* The Presbyterian General Assembly in this country decided in 1814 that baptism by Dr Priestley, and Unitarians in general, should not be considered as valid. The same decision was also extended to other ministrations besides baptism.

form of words used, Matt. xxviii. 19, was strictly adhered to, at least in the third century, viz: *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* It appears, however, that at the time of Justin Martyr, they did not always confine themselves to these particular words, but sometimes added others by way of explanation.

We find very little mention made of baptism, from the time of those who were generally called *Fathers*, that is from the age of Augustine to the reformation.

It soon became a maxim, that as baptism was a sacrament that was to be used only *once*, it was exceedingly wrong to *re-baptize* any person; and it is pleasant to observe the precaution that pope Boniface hit upon to prevent this in dubious cases. In his statutes or instructions he says, "They whose baptism is dubious, ought without scruple to be baptized, with this protestation, *I do not re-baptize thee, but if thou art not baptized, I baptize thee,*" &c. This is the first example that I have found of *conditional baptism*.

From the earliest account of the ordinance, we find that children received the Lord's supper, and that baptism always preceded communion. In a book of divine offices, written as some think in the eleventh century, it is ordained that care be taken that young children receive no food after baptism, and that they do not even give them suck without necessity, till after they have participated of the body of Christ.

## SECTION II.

### THE STATE OF OPINIONS CONCERNING BAPTISM, SINCE THE REFORMATION.

It is remarkable that though the Waldenses always practised infant baptism, many of the Albigenses, if not all of them, held that baptism ought to be confined to adults. This was the opinion of the Petrobrussians, and also of Berenger.

Wickliffe thought baptism to be necessary to salvation. And Luther not only retained the rite of baptism, but even the ceremony of *exorcism*. At least this was retained in the greatest part of the Lutheran churches.

It appeared, however, presently after the reformation by Luther, that great numbers had been well prepared to follow him, and even to go farther than he did. Very man

had been so much scandalized with the abuses of baptism, and the Lord's supper especially, as to reject them, either in the whole, or in part. The baptism of infants was very generally thought to be irrational, and therefore it was administered only to adults. Most of those who rejected the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, were of this persuasion, as was Socinus himself. Indeed, he and some others, thought that the rite of baptism was only to be used when persons were converted to christianity from some other religion, and was not to be applied to any who were born of christian parents; it does not appear, however, that those who held this opinion ever formed a separate sect, or that their numbers were considerable; but those who rejected infant baptism were then, and still are, very numerous.

In the sixteenth century, the *Baptists*, so called, brought great odium upon themselves in Europe, by reason of their wild notions, respecting the reign of Christ, or of the saints upon earth, but at present they are as peaceable as any other christians. In Holland, they are called Mennonites, from Menno, a distinguished character among them, and they espouse the pacific principles of the Quakers. In England, the Baptists are very numerous, consisting of two sects, the largest, called *particular* Baptists, from their holding the doctrine of particular election, the other *general* Baptists, from their holding the belief of general redemption.

The church of England retains the baptism of infants, and also the use of the sign of the cross, and of godfathers. It also admits of baptism by women, a custom derived from the opinion of the indispensable necessity of baptism to salvation. In the thirty-nine articles we find the doctrine of an invisible work of God accompanying baptism, as well as the Lord's supper; and in the church catechism it is said that by baptism a person becomes *a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*

The doctrine of the church of Scotland is of a piece with this. For baptism is said, in their confession of faith, to be "a sign or seal of the covenant of grace, of persons ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins," &c.

The Dissenters of the Calvinistic persuasion in England, may possibly retain the opinion of some spiritual grace accompanying baptism, though I rather think it is not at present held by them. Nothing, however, of it is retained by

those who are called *rational Dissenters*. They consider the baptism of adult persons as the mode of taking upon them the christian profession; and that when it is applied to infants, an obligation is acknowledged by the parents to educate their children in the principles of the christian religion. The Quakers make no use either of this rite, or of the Lord's supper.

After baptism and the Lord's supper had been overlaid with the superstitious practices above described, five other ceremonies came to be ranked in the same class with these as accompanied with a certain divine virtue and efficacy. Peter Lombard, in the twelfth century, is the first who mentions *seven sacraments*. It is supposed that from the expression of the *seven spirits of God*, in the book of Revelation, there came to be a notion of the seven-fold operation of the spirit. But the origin is doubtful. Eugenius the pope, mentions these seven sacraments in his *instructions to the Armenians*, and the whole doctrine concerning them was finally settled by the council of Trent.

The five additional sacraments to the Lord's Supper, and Baptism, are, *Confirmation, Penance, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction*.

*Confirmation* was derived from the *second unction*, which was originally an appendage to baptism. The first express institution of this sacrament is in the decree of pope Eugenius, in 1439, in which he says, "the second sacrament is confirmation, the matter of which is chrism (a composition of olive oil and balm) blessed by the bishop, and though the priest may give the other unction, the bishop only can confer this." Confirmation is still retained in the church of Rome. The rite is preserved in the church of England, but it is not regarded as a sacrament. Chrism is omitted, but the ceremony can only be performed by the bishop.

*Penance* will be treated of in another connection in this work. The church of England retains something of this sacrament in what is termed *absolution*.

*Holy orders* relates to the *delivery of the vessels*, used in the celebration of the eucharist, from the bishop to the priest, giving him power "to offer sacrifices to God, and to celebrate masses for the living and the dead.;" This is distinct from the office of the *Priesthood* in general. The Catholics say, that their priests have two kinds of power,

viz: that of *consecrating* and that of *absolving*; the one they receive by the imposition of hands by the bishop, the other by the delivery of the vessels, or the performance of the sacrament of holy orders.

*Matrimony*, according to the church of Rome, consists of the *matter* which is the *inward consent of the parties*, and the *form* which is the priest solemnly declaring them to be man and wife, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A great inconvenience that resulted from making marriage a sacrament was, that the connection was held to be indissoluble. The doctrine of the absolute indissolubility of marriage, even for adultery, was not finally settled till the council of Trent.

*Extreme Unction*, so called from its being used only on the near approach of death, is the application of olive oil, blessed by the bishop, to all the five senses, using these words, "By this sacred unction may God grant thee his mercy in whatsoever thou hast offended, by sight, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching;" the priest applying the oil to each of the senses, as he pronounces the name of it.

It is much to be wished, that as these five additional sacraments are now universally abandoned in all the reformed churches, christians would rectify their notions concerning the remaining two, and not consider them, as they did in the times of popish darkness, to be *outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace*. For that will always encourage the laying an improper stress upon them, to the undervaluing of that good disposition of mind, and those good works, which alone can recommend us to the favor of God, and to which only his especial grace and favor is annexed.

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## PART VIII.

### A HISTORY OF THE CHANGES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE METHOD OF CONDUCTING PUBLIC WORSHIP.

THE first Christians probably assembled in large rooms in private houses for public worship, or used buildings for the purpose, similar to the Jewish synagogues. These buildings were not called *temples* till the time of Constantine. When that Emperor ordered the Christian churches



to be rebuilt, it was done with great pomp, and before were used, the ceremony of *consecration* was performed which at first consisted of the usual forms of public ship, and in some cases was repeated on the same day nually. Afterwards, they were sprinkled with holy water, relics were deposited in them, images of the tutelary saints were painted on the walls, also crosses and other figures were traced on the walls and pavement, as the Greek Latin alphabet in the form of a cross, and the litany of virgin Mary and other saints. Even the bells were consecrated, or, as the common people said, *baptized*. Vases of *holy water* were placed at the entrances of churches to which those entering dipped their finger, and made their foreheads with the sign of the cross. A fondness for this sign was an early superstition. *Wax lights* were used in the churches in the day time. *Altars, incense, and processions*, copied from the pagans, were also introduced into the worship of Christians.

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In the course of time, the public services were more and more burdened with pagan and Jewish additions, and domestic inventions. Each church of note had its peculiar *ritual*. Augustine complained that the ceremonial observances were so numerous, that the condition of the Jews under the Law was more tolerable. The Western church was loaded with ceremonies, chiefly by Gregory the Great in the sixth century. The Roman ritual was the one generally used. But the greatest perversion was the performance of religious services in a foreign tongue, which hearers could not understand. The Latin language was at first generally understood by Christians in the West, but was gradually superseded by the modern tongues of Europe. Yet it still continues to be used in all the Roman Catholic churches to audiences totally ignorant of it. The object of this was to keep the people in ignorance, and dependent upon the priests. This is not peculiar to the Catholics, however, for a veneration for antiquity leads the Syrian, Egyptian, and Abyssinian Christians to adopt a similar custom. The dress of the clergy was distinguished from that of other persons. The council of Carthage prescribed the *cope*, and Gregory the Great drew new fashions from the old ceremonial law of the Jews.

Originally Christians met to read the scriptures, to explain them, or to preach, to sing psalms, to pray, and to administer the Lord's supper. Then it became fashionable to repeat a creed; at first it was done only by the priest at baptism, or on the supper, or the day preceding Good Friday, but afterwards by the whole assembly constantly. The posture of priest and people during public worship became a matter of great consequence. The customs of standing, kneeling, prostration, turning the face towards the East, during prayer; of standing, whilst the gospel was read; and of bowing, when the name of Jesus was repeated in the creed, prevailed at different times. Singing was always employed in public worship. They used the Psalms of David, or hymns of their own composing. The method of singing by *antiphony* or *anthem* arose in the East in the fourth century, and was adopted in the West in the fifth. Gregory the Great composed an *Antiphonary* for the whole year, with responses for every day of it. Musical instruments were not introduced into churches till the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Thomas Aquinas said, the church does not use them in praising God, lest she should seem to Judaize. In 1312, Marinus Sanutus introduced organs into churches. At first, preaching was only an exposition of scripture. Origen indulged in a more copious manner, and sermons gradually acquired the style of harangues to the populace, or pleas at the bar. Of such a nature in form were the compositions of Chrysostom, and other eloquent preachers of antiquity. In the ninth century, bishops and priests ceased to instruct the people in this way, and in the Roman Catholic church few sermons are preached at the present day, the audience, except on particular occasions and festivals, meeting only to hear prayers, and to celebrate mass. In order to remedy the ignorance of the priesthood, Charlemagne ordered *Homilies* or discourses upon the epistles and gospels, to be compiled from the works of the ancient doctors of the church, and to be committed to memory by the clergy, and recited to the people. In imitation of this scheme, a *book of homilies* was compiled and appointed to be read in the church of England. Prayers were in the primitive church delivered without book, and were such as the bishop, or the priest, who officiated, could prepare himself. But the custom was introduced of composing prayers beforehand, and submitting them to competent per-

sons for approbation. Thence came *liturgies*, or forms of celebrating public worship, which are first mentioned in the fourth century. In early times, though the officiating minister delivered the prayers, the people were not entirely silent, for they made short responses, as *Lift up your heart—we lift them up unto the Lord; and the Lord be with you—and with thy spirit*. At the close of the services, there was a custom of reciting a *roll*, in which the names of the more eminent saints of the Catholic church, and of the holy bishops, martyrs, or confessors of every particular church, were registered.

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The early Christians had no festivals besides Sunday, on which they always met for public worship, and abstained from labor. In imitation of the Jews or heathen, they soon had many annual festivals. The first was *Easter*, or the anniversary of Christ's death and resurrection; and a fast kept forty days previously (a superstitious imitation of our Savior's fasting in the desert) is called *Lent*. A fast on the anniversary of Christ's crucifixion, or what we call *Good Friday*, is of great antiquity. As the time that our Lord lay in the tomb was about forty hours, a fast kept in commemoration of that event was called *Quadragesima*. *Pentecost* was a Jewish festival, celebrated fifty days after the Passover. The Christian festival at the same time is called *Whitsuntide*. *Christmas*, in commemoration of the nativity of Jesus, was at first held on the sixth of January but was changed to the twenty-fifth of December in consequence of the institution of the *Epiphany*, kept in honor of our Savior's baptism, on that day. The feast of *Ascension* was observed about the time of Augustine, those of *Circumcision*, *Purification*, and *Advent* in the fifth, ninth, and thirteenth centuries respectively. Various other fasts, festivals, and vigils, too many to detail, were established in the cumbrous ritual of the churches, both in the East and the West. Many of these are still retained in the reformed churches; the church of England appropriates thirty-one days to festivals, ninety-five to fasts, and twenty-nine to the saints. In so little esteem, however, are these observances held by the more enlightened members of the established church, that there can be no doubt but that when

any reformation takes place, a great retrenchment will be made in this article.

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## PART IX.

### THE HISTORY OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

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#### THE INTRODUCTION.

THE changes which the discipline of the Christian church underwent from the time of the apostles to the reformation, were as great, and of as much importance in practice, as the changes in any other article relating to Christianity. From being highly favorable to good conduct, the established maxims of it came at length to be a cover for every kind of immorality, to those who chose to avail themselves of them.

To many persons, I doubt not, this will be as interesting an object as any thing in the history of Christianity, and to introduce it in this place will make the easiest connection between the two great divisions of my work, I mean the corruptions of *doctrine*, and the abuses of *power* in the Christian church. It will also serve to show in what manner these departures from the Christian system promoted each other.

## SECTION I.

### THE HISTORY OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE TILL THE REFORMATION.

IN the purer ages of the church, the offences which gave public scandal were few; but when they did occur, they were rigorously punished. The circumstances of their situation required great circumspection. Subsequently the chief offence to which they were liable, was denying their faith in times of persecution. Hence it became a matter of consequence on what terms they should re-admit the lapsed into their fellowship, and it was the principal business of the councils in the fourth and fifth centuries to determine concerning the degrees of penance and the method of receiving penitents into the church. Four orders of penitents were recognized in those times, who were required to

make different kinds of expiation for their sins. A repetition of the offence for which they had been once excommunicated, precluded a second re-admission, except in the article of death. But in the seventh century, the old discipline was relaxed, and persons were admitted to communion after a second offence. However, there were some irreparable crimes as murder, adultery, and apostacy, that did not admit of an atonement, and a reunion with the church. At the entreaty of confessors, the penalties imposed upon penitents were sometimes relaxed; this was called *indulgence*—the germ of a monstrous abuse in later times. It was also the custom of the primitive church to require those who had been excommunicated, to confess their sins before re-admission to its privileges. In the course of time, conscientious persons voluntarily confessed their private sins to priests, possessing their confidence. Thence it was soon imposed as a duty, and the practice of *confession*, so simple and innocent in its beginning, afterwards reached the high pitch, which it now holds in the Catholic church.

But the very rigor of discipline and the heavy penance imposed for sins, were one great cause eventually of the relaxation of all discipline. The council of Nice ordained that those who apostatized, being unbaptized, should pass three years, and those who had been of the *faithful*, seven years of penance. Various periods were assigned for different crimes, according to their enormity, by different bishops and churches. Private confession, and private penance gradually succeeded the public acknowledgment and expiation of sins; thus the restraints upon vice were diminished, and the priests became gainers in several respects.

Had Christians contented themselves with admonishing and finally excommunicating those who were guilty of notorious crimes, and with requiring public confession, with restitution in case of injustice, and left all private offence to every man's own conscience, no inconvenience would have arisen from their discipline. But by urging too much the importance of confession, and by introducing corporeal austerities, as fasting, &c. as a proper mode of penance and then changing these for alms, and in fact for money in a future period, paved the way for the utter ruin of all good discipline; and at length brought it to be much worse than a state of no discipline at all.

The discipline of the church continued to decay. Les

persons should not confess their sins fully to the priest, it was ordered by the council of Challons in 813, that he should make particular inquiry whether they had committed such and such crimes, or not. This matter of confession gave rise to a new kind of casuistry, which consisted in ascertaining the nature of all kinds of crimes, and in proportioning the penalties to each. Theodore, bishop of Canterbury, in a work called *the Penitential*, regulated penance, distinguishing the different kinds of crimes, and prescribing forms of consolation, exhortation, and absolution, adapted to each particular case. This book became a pattern for other works of the same nature.

What is properly called *auricular confession*, was established in a Lateran council by Innocent III. This required a particular enumeration of sins and follies, and a confession by every adult person to be made to a proper priest at least once a year.

Together with this change in the business of confession, other causes were at the same time operating to the corruption of church discipline, but nothing contributed to it more than the stress which was then laid upon many things foreign to real virtue, and which were made to take the place of it. Of this nature were the customary devotions of those days, consisting in the frequent repetition of certain prayers, in bodily austerities, in pilgrimages, in alms to the poor, and donations to the church, &c. These were things that could be *ascertained*, so that it might be known with certainty whether the party had conformed to the penalty or not; whereas a *change of heart and of character* was a thing of a less obvious nature, and indeed not much attended to by the generality of confessors at that time.

About the end of the eighth century the *commutation of penances* began, and instead of the ancient severities, *vocal prayers* came to be all that was enjoined, so many *Paters* (or repetitions of the Lord's prayer) were held to be equivalent to so many days' fasting, &c. and the rich were allowed to buy off their penances by giving alms. Also the getting of many masses to be said was thought to be a mode of devotion by which God was so much honored, that the commutation of penance for masses was much practised. Pilgrimages and wars came on afterwards.

One cause of this *commutation* was the impossibility of performing the required penances within the term of hu-

man life, and the mode in which it was done was sufficiently ludicrous. Thus it was determined by and Peter Damiani that a hundred years of penance be compensated by twenty repetitions of the Psalter accompanied with discipline, or the use of a whip on the skin. The computation was made in the following manner. Three thousand strokes with the whip were judged equivalent to a year of penance, and a thousand blows to be given in the course of repeating ten psalms. Frequently, all the psalms, which are one hundred and twenty psalters to one hundred years. It is amusing at this day, and in a Protestant country, to read the psalm easily dispatched this task in six days, and charged some offenders for whom he had undertaken it. Once at the beginning of Lent, he desired Damiani to impose upon him a thousand years of penance, and he nearly finished it before the end of the same Lent. Damiani also imposed upon the archbishop of Milan a penance of an hundred years, which he redeemed by a sum of money to be paid annually.

Fleury acknowledges that when the penances were impossible, on account of the multitude of them, the penitents were obliged to have recourse to compensations and excuses, such as these repetitions of psalms, bowings, scourgings, pilgrimages, &c. things, as he observes, that were performed without conversion.

The monks, becoming confessors, contributed to the ruin of ecclesiastical discipline. The right of asylum or the protection given to criminals who took refuge in churches, in imitation of a heathen custom, also excited licentiousness in church government. This abuse grew to such a height that it required to be reformed several times. Crosses on the public roads, and various other things in places, acquired the character of being *sacred*, and became asylums for fugitives from justice. At one time a criminal was safe from the law within the precincts of a cardinal's palace.

Another source of great corruption in discipline was the abuse of pilgrimages. These were undertaken more from a love of curiosity, or a natural reverence for any place that had been distinguished by important transactions. Pilgrimages began to be common about the fourth century, and

by the writers of that time, that some weak people then valued themselves on having seen such places, and imagined that their prayers would be more favorably heard there than elsewhere. But in latter times much more stress was laid upon these things, and in the eighth century pilgrimages began to be enjoined by way of penance, and at length the pilgrimage was often a warlike expedition into the Holy Land, or service in some other of the wars in which the ambition of the pope was interested. By this means all the use even of the pilgrimage itself, as a penance, was wholly lost. For, as Mr Fleury observes, a penitent marching alone was much more free from temptations to sin than one who went to the wars in company; and some of these penitents even took dogs and horses along with them, that they might take the diversion of hunting in these expeditions.

Solitary pilgrimages were, however, much in fashion, and we find some very rigorous ones submitted to by persons of great eminence in those superstitious times; when it was a maxim, that nothing contributed so much to the health of the soul, as the mortification of the body. In 997, an emperor of Germany, by the advice of the monks, went barefooted to Mount Garganus, famous for the supposed presence of the archangel Michael, as a penance.

Before the eighth century it had been the custom to confine penitents near the churches, where they had no opportunity of relapsing into their offences; but in this century pilgrimages, and especially distant ones, began to be enjoined under the idea that penitents should lead a *vagabond life*, like Cain. This, however, was soon abused; as under this pretence, penitents wandered about naked, and loaded with irons, and therefore it was forbidden in the time of Charlemagne. But still it was the custom to impose upon penitents pilgrimages of established reputation, especially that to the Holy Land, to which there was a constant resort from all parts of Europe. This was the foundation of the *Crusades*.

Fleury observes, that *plenary indulgences* had their origin with the Crusades; for till then it had never been known that by any *single work* the sinner was held to be discharged from all temporal punishments that might be due from the justice of God.

As it was the abuse of indulgences that was the imme-



diate cause of the reformation by Luther, it may be worth while to go a little back to consider the rise and progress of them. It has been observed in a former period, that all that was meant by *indulgences* in the primitive times, was the relaxation of penance in particular cases, especially at the intercession of the confessors. From this small beginning, the nature of it being at length quite changed, the abuse grew to be so enormous, that it could no longer be supported; and the fall of it occasioned the downfall of a great part of the papal power.

As an expression of penitence and humiliation, a variety of penances, and some of them of a painful and whimsical nature, had been introduced into the discipline of the church. At first they were voluntary, but afterwards they were imposed, and could not be dispensed with but by the leave of the bishop, who often sold dispensations or indulgences, and thereby raised great sums of money. In the twelfth century the popes, observing what a source of gain this was to the bishops, limited their power, and by degrees drew the whole business of indulgences to Rome. And after remitting the temporal pains and penalties to which sinners had been subjected, they went at length so far as to pretend to abolish the punishment due to wickedness in a future state.

A book of Rates superseded the use of the works, called *Penitentials*, detailing the sums that were to be paid for particular crimes.

The Popes pretended not only to remit the future punishment of sin, but also to absolve from the *guilt* of it, in consideration of the vast stock of merit which had accrued to the church from the good works of saints and martyrs, besides what were necessary to insure their own salvation.

Among other things advanced by cardinal Cajetan in support of the doctrine of indulgences, in his controversy with Luther on the subject, he said, that one drop of Christ's blood being sufficient to redeem the whole human race, the remaining quantity that was shed in the garden, and upon the cross, was left as a legacy to the church, to form a treasure, from which indulgences were to be drawn, and administered by the Roman pontiffs.

Though in this something may be allowed to the heat of controversy, the doctrine itself had a sanction of a much higher authority. For Leo X. in 1518, decreed that the popes had the power of remitting both the crime and the

punishment of sin, the crime by the sacrament of penance, and the temporal punishment by indulgences, the benefit of which extended to the dead as well as to the living; and that these indulgences are drawn from the superabundance of the merits of Jesus Christ and the saints, of which treasure the pope is the dispenser.

This Leo X. whose extravagance and expenses had no bounds, had recourse to these indulgences, among other methods of recruiting his exhausted finances; and in the publication of them he promised the forgiveness of all sins, past, present, or to come; and however enormous was their nature. These he sold by wholesale to those who endeavored to make the most of them; so that passing, like other commodities, from one hand to another, they were even hawked about in the streets by the common peddlers, who used the same artifices to raise the price of these commodities, as of any other in which they dealt.

One Tetzal, a Dominican friar, particularly distinguished himself in pushing the sale of these indulgences. Among other things, in the sermons and speeches which he made on this occasion, he used to say, that, if a man had even lain with the mother of God, he was able, with the pope's power, to pardon the crime; and he boasted that he had saved more souls from hell by these indulgences, than St Peter had converted to christianity by all his preaching. There would be no end of reciting the blasphemous pretensions of the venders of these indulgences, with respect to the enormity of crimes, the number of persons benefited by them, or the time to which they extended. Bishop Burnet had seen an indulgence which extended to ten thousand years. Sometimes indulgences were affixed to particular churches and altars, and to particular times or days, chiefly to the year of Jubilee. They are also affixed to such things as may be carried about with a person, as *Agnus Dei's*, to medals, rosaries, or scapularies. They are also affixed to some prayers, the devout repetition of them being a means of procuring great indulgences. The granting of all these is left entirely to the discretion of the pope.

Such scandalous excesses as these excited the indignation of Luther, who first preached against the abuse of indulgences only, then, in consequence of meeting with opposition, against indulgences themselves, and at length against the papal power that granted them.

Before this time the council of Constance had, in some measure restrained the abuse of indulgences, and particularly had made void all those that had been granted during the schism. But it appears, that, notwithstanding these restraints, the abuses were greater than ever in the time of Leo X.

The council of Trent allowed of indulgences in general terms, but forbade the selling of them, and referred the whole to the discretion of the pope; so that, upon the whole, the abuse was established by this council. But though the reformation may not have produced any formal decisions in the church of Rome against the abuse of indulgences so as to affect the *doctrine* of them, the *practice* has been much moderated; and at present it does not appear that much more stress is laid upon such things by catholics in general, than by protestants themselves.

Some remains of the doctrine of indulgences are still retained in the church of England, since the bishops have the power of dispensing with the marriage of persons more near akin than the law allows, which in their own phraseology is the *crime of incest*.

The church of England also retains something yet worse, in the power of *absolution*, or an authoritative declaration of the forgiveness of sins. For after confession, the priest is directed to absolve a sick person in this form of words: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is exactly a popish absolution, and is therefore liable to all the objections to which popish absolutions and indulgences are liable.

The business of auricular confession, and also that of private penance, is entirely abolished; but the *bishops' courts* remain, which by mixing things of a civil with those of an ecclesiastical nature, are of great disservice to both. And whereas by the rules of these courts, public penance is enjoined for certain offences, persons are allowed to commute them for sums of money.

## SECTION II.

OF THE METHOD OF ENFORCING CHURCH CENSURES, OR THE HISTORY OF PERSECUTION, TILL THE REFORMATION.

HAVING traced the general course of church discipline, in all its changes, from the time of the apostles to the reformation, it may not be amiss to go over the same ground once more, with a view to consider the methods that have been from time to time taken, in order to enforce the censures of the church; and in this we shall have occasion to lament, among other things, the most horrid abuse of both ecclesiastical and civil power; while men were continually attempting to do by force what is not in the power of force to do, viz: to guide the conscience, or even to compel an outward conformity, in large bodies of people, to the same religious profession. Of this interference of the civil power in the business of religion, we shall see the first steps in this period, in which a great deviation was made from the admirable simplicity of the rules laid down by our Savior.

In order to prevent the progress of vice, and in any case to preserve the reputation of christian societies, our Lord laid down a most excellent rule, as a general instruction for the conduct of his disciples; namely, first to admonish an offending brother in the most private and prudent manner. If that was not effectual, one or two more were to give their sanction to the reproof; if that failed, the case was to come under the cognizance of the whole congregation; and if the offender proved obstinate and refractory in this last instance, he was to be expelled from the society, in consequence of which the church was discharged from all farther attention to his conduct, and he was considered in the same light as if he had never belonged to it. Such, and so admirably simple, and well adapted to its end, was the system of discipline in the constitution of the christian church; and for some time it was strictly adhered to, and the effects of it were great and happy. By this means christians effectually *watched over one another in love, exhorting one another daily*, and not *suffering sin in each other*. Thus, also, by forming regular bodies, they became more firmly united and attached to one another, and their zeal for the common cause was greatly increased.

The first christians used no other method besides *admo-*

dition and reproof for enforcing the observance of christian duties. If these failed, their last resort was *excommunication*. As the decisions of the church were supposed to be ratified at the last day at the tribunal of Christ, it was soon believed that an excommunicated person was debarred from heaven hereafter. Those who were thus sentenced were of course deeply affected with their awful condition. It was usual to see them standing at the doors of the churches, with all the marks of the deepest dejection and contrition, entreating the ministers and people with tears in their eyes, and earnestly begging their prayers, and restoration to the peace of the church.

When Philip, the governor of Egypt, would have entered a christian church, after the commission of some crime the bishop forbade him till he first made confession of his sin, and passed through the order of penitents, a sentence which, we are told, he willingly submitted to. Even the emperor Theodosius the Great, was excommunicated by Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, for a barbarous slaughter of the Thessalonians; and that great prince submitted to a penance of eight months, and was not received into the church till after the most humble confession of his offence, and giving the most undeniable proof of his sincerity.

When christians began to debate and divide about religious *opinions*, it is lamentable, but not strange, that they should lay an undue stress on what they deemed to be the *right of faith*, and that they should apply church censures to check the growth and spread of heresies. The first remarkable abuse of this kind was about 196, when Victor, bishop of Rome, excommunicated all the Eastern churches, on account of a difference of opinion and practice with respect to the time of celebrating Easter.

This spirit of denunciation could not fail to kindle perpetual quarrels between different churches. The excommunicated would appeal to the patriarchal churches, or councils, or emperors, to get the sentence revoked. The party who gained the ascendancy in these conflicts was called the *orthodox*, and the vanquished the *heretical*, without any regard to the matter in debate. It is well known that the Arians and the Athanasians were in this manner reputed *orthodox* by turns; as both had the sanction of councils and emperors in their favor; till, in consequence

of mere faction, and the authority of the emperors, the party of Athanasius prevailed at last.

The first instance that we meet with of the use of actual force, or rather of desire to make use of it, by a Christian church, was in the proceedings against Paul, bishop of Samosata; when, at the request of a Christian synod, the heathen Emperor Aurelian, expelled him from the episcopal house.

But as soon as the Empire became what is called Christian, we have examples enough of the interference of civil power in matters of religion; and we soon find instances of the abuse of excommunication, and the addition of civil incapacities annexed to that of ecclesiastical censure. In a council held at Ptolemais in Cyrene, Andronicus the prefect was excommunicated, and it was expressed in the sentence, that no temple of God should be open unto him, that no one should salute him during his life, and that he should not be buried after his death.

The Emperor Constantine, besides banishing Arius himself, ordered his writings to be burnt; and forbidding any person to conceal him under pain of death, deprived many of those who were declared heretics of the privileges which he had granted to Christians in general, and besides imposing fines upon them, forbade their assemblies, and demolished their places of worship. On the other hand, the Emperor Constantius banished the orthodox bishops because they would not condemn Athanasius. Nestorius was banished by Theodosius, in whose reign persecution for the sake of religion made greater advances than in any other within this period.

Notwithstanding all the hardships which the Christians had lately suffered from the pagans, and the just remonstrances they had made on the subject, no sooner were they in possession of the same power, than they were too ready to make a similar use of it; and instead of showing the world the contrast of a truly Christian spirit, they were eager to retaliate upon their enemies, whom they now had at their mercy.

In the year 346, it was decreed that all the heathen temples in cities should be shut up, but that those in the villages should not be meddled with. Hence the heathens began to be distinguished by the name of *Pagans* (*Pagani*) that is, inhabitants of villages. In the year 369, these pa-

gans were laid under farther restrictions: for though they were allowed to frequent their temples as usual, they were not suffered to make any sacrifices there.

Even the better informed christians soon became advocates for the interference of civil power in ecclesiastical matters. Augustine, the oracle of the church in his own, and still more in succeeding times, confessed that he once thought heretics ought not to be harassed by catholics, but seeing, as he believed, that the laws made by the emperors against errorists had proved the happy occasion of their conversion, he changed his opinion, and pleaded in his writings for the use of force in matters of religion.

As books are a great source of information, those who have wished to suppress any noxious opinion, or one so considered, have sought to suppress the books that taught it. The heathens endeavored to destroy the sacred books of christians. In the fourth and fifth centuries, steps were taken by the dominant sects in the church to destroy all works that did not conform to the dominant faith and practice. The writings of Arius and Athanasius were respectively condemned by their opponents. Theodosius, the emperor, made a law in 448, ordering all books, the doctrine of which was not conformable to the councils of Nice and Ephesus, and also to the decisions of Cyril, to be destroyed and the concealers of them to be put to death. In 494 pope Gelasius, in a council at Rome, specified the books that were rejected by the church, but did not lay any penalty on those who should read them.

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As we proceed in the course of history, we behold bigotry and violence keeping pace with ignorance and superstition.

*Compulsory penances*, introduced in the seventh century arose from the union of ecclesiastical and civil offices in the same person, and the custom of enforcing regulations in religion by the secular arm. In Spain, the bishops, finding offenders refusing to submit to penance, complained to their parliament, and requested the princes to interpose their temporal power. The punishments that were enjoined in this manner, were prohibitions to eat flesh, to wear linen, to mount a horse, &c.

In this period the sentence of excommunication became

a much more dreadful thing than it had been before, and a proportionably greater solemnity was added to the forms of it. The most solemn part of the new ceremonial was the extinction of lamps or candles, by throwing them on the ground, with a solemn imprecation, that the person against whom the excommunication was pronounced, might in like manner, be extinguished, or destroyed by the judgment of God. And because the people were summoned to attend this ceremony by the sound of a bell, and the curses accompanying the excommunication were recited out of a book, while the person who pronounced them stood on some balcony or stage, from which he could throw down his lights, we have the phrase of *cursing by bell, book, and candle*. The first example of excommunication by throwing down lighted lamps was at Rheims, about the year 900, when the bishops excommunicated some murderers in this manner.

When heresies sprung up in the church, and there were many other offenders who were out of the reach of church power, it came to be the custom to pronounce these curses against them on certain days of the year, and we find Thursday before Easter made choice of for this purpose. Thus we read that John XXII. according to the custom of the church of Rome, on the Thursday before Easter, published a bull, by which he excommunicated the poor of Lyons (or the Albigenses) the Arnoldists, and all heretics in general, the Corsairs, the falsifiers of apostolical bulls, and all who usurped the city of Rome, or the patrimony of St Peter.

At length sentences of general excommunication becoming frequent (every decretal, though the subject of it was ever so trifling, denouncing this sentence against all who should disobey it) and consequently whole classes of men, and sometimes whole communities, falling under those censures, they came to be despised and lost their effect.

But the church went farther. She annexed the most dreadful civil penalties to her excommunications. Mingling with the Roman empire, and receiving numerous accessions to her strength by the conversion of Germans, Goths, and Celts, she became more secular and worldly, and copied not secretly from the imperial constitutions and the pagan customs her own regulations. The temporal sword was employed to cut off those recreant in the faith. The fitting recompense for heresy was thought to be *burning alive*.



Handing over their victims to the civil power, the court of the Inquisition nevertheless pretended to recommend them to its mercy, even when destined to death, though it could not have really been their wish.

The mode of deciding in the persecution of the Albigenses, who were heretics, was to throw the suspected person into water, on the supposition that, if he was a heretic, the devil within him, being lighter than water, would prevent his sinking.

In 1215, at the fourth council of Lateran, it was decreed that all heretics should be delivered over to the civil magistrate to be burned alive. John xv. 6, was quoted in support of the infamous act.

Previously to this, however, the Waldenses, inhabiting the mountainous parts of the Alps, and the Albigenses, living in the southern provinces of France, had roused the sanguinary disposition of the church of Rome. These people were dreadfully persecuted by Innocent III. who first prohibited all manner of intercourse or communication with them, confiscated their goods, disinherited their children, destroyed their houses, denied them the rite of sepulchre, and gave their accusers one third of their effects. But in 1198, he erected the court of *Inquisition*, the object of which was the utter extirpation of them, in which Dominic was the chief actor. Afterwards he published Crusades against them; promising all who would engage in that war, the same indulgences that had been granted to those who engaged in the expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Land. In consequence of this, great multitudes of them were destroyed with all manner of cruelties.

This war, or rather massacre, continued near forty years, and a million of men are supposed to have lost their lives in it. And of these, it is said, there were three hundred thousand of the Crusaders themselves. However, the consequence of this persecution was the same with that of most others; the reprobated opinion being farther disseminated by this means. It was afterwards imbibed by Wickliffe, and from him it passed into Bohemia.

Perhaps the most horrible and perfidious of any single act of barbarity, committed by the papists, was the massacre of the Protestants in Paris, on the eve of St Bartholomew, in 1572; when the Huguenots (as the protestants in France are called) were lulled asleep by all the forms of

pacification, and an attempt was made to rise upon them, and destroy them all in one night. In Paris, and some other towns, it took effect, and great numbers were massacred when they were altogether unapprehensive of danger. Had this happened in a popular tumult, it would have been more excusable; but it was not only a most deliberate act of perfidy, concerted long before the time of execution, but the king himself, Charles IX. bore a part in it, firing upon his own subjects from his window; and Pope Gregory XIII. gave solemn thanks to God for this massacre in the church of St Louis, whither he himself went in procession. The guns of St Angelo were also fired, and bonfires were made in the streets of Rome upon this occasion.

Some Franciscans in the fourteenth century held that neither our lord nor his disciples had any personal property. This harmless opinion was combated in the most savage manner by the Dominicans; John XXII. in 1324, pronounced it to be a pestilential, erroneous, damnable, and blasphemous doctrine, subversive of the catholic faith; and therefore multitudes of the poor Franciscans were seized by the Dominican inquisitors and committed to the flames.

It would be unjust, however, to suppose that all the members of the *Catholic church*, as it is called, have been equally bent on the extirpation of heretics by these violent methods. At all times there have been advocates for moderation among very zealous papists. Thomas Aquinas, who for many centuries was esteemed the bulwark of the popish cause, maintained that religion ought not to be extended by force; alleging that no person can believe as he would, and that the will should not be forced. There were also those who remonstrated very strongly against all the persecutions of the protestants by the papists, especially those of Philip II. of Spain, as well as those of Louis XIV. of France. And there is reason to believe that the minds of the Catholics in general are now so much enlightened, partly by reflection, but chiefly by experience, that they would no more act the same things over again, than the Protestants would, who, as will be seen in the next section, were guilty of almost as great excesses in proportion to the extent of their power.

In England, there were various statutes enacted against heretics from the reign of Richard II. ordering them to be imprisoned; and burnt, and their property to be forfeited to the king, according to the degree of their offence.

By virtue of these, the clergy exercised numberless ties upon the people, there being hundreds of exam persons imprisoned, and probably put to death by th

The prohibition of books was an evil that was increased after the reformation, though it began There were rigorous edicts against the writings of lisse and John Huss. But Leo X. renewed them i demning the propositions of Luther, and all the boo bore his name. He made a decree that no book sho published in Rome, or in any other city or diocese, it had been approved by an officer appointed for th pose; and he was the first who made any decree nature. The popes that succeeded him, forbade und of excommunication, the reading of all the books o tics; and in order to distinguish them, Philip II. o the Spanish inquisition to print a catalogue of them, Paul IV. also did at Rome; at the same time orderin to be burnt. In 1597, Clement VIII. published a catalogue of books prohibited, and among them wa us' translation of the Old Testament, and Beza's New, though the former might, at the discretion of th op, be granted to learned men.

### SECTION III.

#### OF PERSECUTION BY PROTESTANTS.

I HAVE already observed, that this sanguinary me propagating and establishing religion was adopted, to with other popish maxims, by the reformers; and al history of all reformed countries bears too strong ev of it.

In the wars of Bohemia, both the protestants and agreed that it was lawful to extirpate with fire and all enemies of the *true religion*. The protestants ac ledged that *heretics* were worthy of capital punishme they denied that John Huss was a heretic. Ziska, tl eral of the Hussites, fell upon the sect of the Begha 1421, and put some of them to the sword, and cond the rest to the flames, a punishment which they bor the most cheerful fortitude.

Luther had no idea of the impropriety of civil pe to enforce the true religion, He only objected to th ting heretics to death, but approved of their being co

as madmen. He persuaded the elector of Saxony not to tolerate the followers of Zuinglius, merely because he did not believe the real presence of Christ in the eucharist; and the Lutheran lawyers condemned to death P eter Postellus for being a Zuinglian. They also put to death several Anabaptists. It was not till towards the end of the seventeenth century that the Lutherans adopted the leading maxim which, Mosheim says, had been peculiar to the Arminians, that no good subject was justly punishable by the magistrates for his religious opinions.

Mosheim also says, that Zuinglius is said to have attributed to the civil magistrate such an extensive power in ecclesiastical affairs, as is inconsistent with the essence and genius of religion. He condemned an Anabaptist to be drowned, with this cruel insult, *Qui iterum merget mergetur; He that dips a second time, let him be dipped.*

Calvia went upon the same plan, persecuting many worthy persons, and even procuring Servetus to be burned alive for writing against the doctrine of the Trinity. He also wrote a treatise in order to prove the lawfulness of putting heretics to death; and in one of his letters he says, "Since the papists, in order to vindicate their own superstitions, cruelly shed innocent blood, it is a shame that a christian magistrate should have no courage at all in the defence of certain truth." Even Melancthon, though esteemed to be of a mild and moderate temper, approved of the death of Servetus.

After the reformation in England, the laws against heretics were not relaxed, but the proceedings were appointed to be regular, as in other criminal cases. Thus it was enacted in 1534, that heretics should be proceeded against upon presentment by a jury, or on the oath of two witnesses at least.

When the new liturgy was confirmed by act of parliament in the reign of Edward VI. in 1548, it was ordered that such of the clergy as refused to conform to it, should, upon the first conviction, suffer six months imprisonment, and forfeit a year's income of their benefices; for the second offence they should forfeit all their church preferments, and suffer a year's imprisonment; and for the third offence imprisonment for life. They who should write or print any thing against the book were fined ten pounds for the

first offence, twenty for the second, with forfeiture of all their goods; and imprisonment for life for the third.

Cranmer, whilst he was a Lutheran, consented to the burning of John Lambert and Ann Askew, for those very doctrines for which he himself suffered afterwards; and when he was a sacramentarian he was the cause of the death of Joan Bocher, an Arian, importuning the young king Edward VI. to sign the death warrant; and he is said to have done it with great reluctance, saying, with tears in his eyes, that if he did wrong, it was in submission to his authority (Cranmer's) and that he should answer to God for it.

Many were the severities under which the Puritans labored in the reign of queen Elizabeth, and the princes of the Stuart family; and the Presbyterians were but too ready to act with a high hand in their turn, in the short time that they were in power; but they were soon repaid with interest on the restoration. At the revolution they obtained pretty good terms, but still all those who could not subscribe the doctrinal articles of the church of England, remained subject to the same penalties as before, and a new and severe law was made against the Antitrinitarians. This law, which subjects the offender to confiscation of goods and imprisonment for life, if he persists in acting contrary to the law, still remains in force, though many other hardships under which Dissenters formerly labored have lately been removed.

The persecution of the Remonstrants by the Calvinistic party in Holland was as rancorous in the mode of carrying it on, as any of the popish persecutions, though the penalties did not extend beyond banishment.

All the protestant churches have been too ready to impose their own faith upon others, and to bind all their posterity to believe as they did. But the most remarkable public act of this kind occurs in the history of the protestant church in France. At a synod held in 1612, it was decreed, that they who take holy orders should take this oath. "I, whose name is here underwritten, do receive and approve the confession of faith of the reformed churches in this kingdom, and also promise to persevere in it until death, and to believe and teach agreeably thereunto." In another decree, passed in 1620, they adopt the decrees of the synod of Dort, promising to persevere in that faith all their lives

nd to defend it to the utmost of their power. Is it to be egritted that a church, the principles of which were so narrow and intolerant, should, in the course of divine providence, be suppressed ?

There is too great a mixture of civil penalties in the ordinary discipline of the church of England to this day. According to her canons, every person who maintains anything contrary to the doctrine or rites of the church, or the authority by which they are enforced, is declared to be *ipso facto* excommunicated. Many other offences, which are properly civil, are deemed to be of a spiritual nature, and are punished by excommunication ; which is two-fold, the greater and the less. The latter only excludes a man from the sacrament, and communion in the divine offices ; but the greater excommunication cuts a man off from all commerce with christians in temporal affairs ; so that, if the orders of the church were universally and strictly observed, the poor wretch must necessarily perish ; since no person in the nation might sell him food, raiment, or any convenience whatever.

## SECTION IV.

### THE HISTORY OF MISTAKES CONCERNING MORAL VIRTUE.

Not only did the christian church adopt very wrong and pernicious maxims of church discipline, but christians have also adopted very false and hurtful notions concerning *moral virtue* itself, which is the end of all discipline ; and it may be useful to take a general view of these corruptions, as well as of others.

According to the genuine doctrine of reason and revelation, nothing is of any avail to recommend a man to the favor of God, and to insure his future happiness, besides good dispositions of mind, and a habit and conduct of life agreeable to them. This is the religion of nature, and likewise that of the Old and New Testaments. But the religion of the heathen world, and that of many of the Jews in the time of our Savior, was of a quite different stamp. The heathens, having none but low notions of their Gods, had no idea of recommending themselves to their favor, but by the punctual observance of certain rites, ceremonies, and modes of worship, which at best had no relation to moral virtue,

and often consisted in the most horrid and shameful violation of the plainest natural duties.

The pharisaical Jews, also, overlooking the excellent nature of the moral precepts of their Law, and the perfect character of the great Being whom they were taught to worship, and directed to resemble, attached themselves wholly to ritual observances. Upon these, and on their relation to their ancestor Abraham, they chiefly depended for insuring to themselves the favor of God, to the utter exclusion of all the gentile world, whatever might be their characters in a moral respect.

Our Lord and his apostles took every opportunity of opposing this fundamental corruption of genuine religion, and recalled men's attention to their hearts and lives. And one would have thought that, by the abolition of all the peculiar rites of the Jewish law, and appointing none in their place (besides baptism and the Lord's supper, which are exceedingly simple, and have obvious moral uses) an effectual bar would have been put in the way of the old superstitions. But human nature being the same, and men's dislike to moral virtue operating as before, and making them ready to adopt superstitious observances as a compensation for it, *pretences* and *modes* were not long wanting; and at length proper moral virtue was as effectually excluded in the christian religion, as ever it had been in corrupt Judaism, or heathenism itself; and as great stress was laid upon things that bore no relation to moral virtue, but were in fact, inconsistent with it, and subversive of it, as had ever been done by the most superstitious and misinformed of mankind.

Did not both the most authentic history, and even the present state of religion in the church of Rome, furnish sufficient vouchers of this, it would not, in the present enlightened age, be even credible, that such practices as I shall be obliged to mention, could ever have been used by christians, as methods of recommending themselves to God.

We find that in early times an undue stress was laid upon the ordinances of *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, as if these rites themselves, when duly administered, imparted some *spiritual grace*. Thus baptism was supposed to wash away all past sins; and the act of communion to impart some other secret virtue, by which a title to the blessings of the gospel was secured to the communicant. On this

account, many persons who professed themselves to be christians, deferred baptism till late in life, or even to the hour of death, that they might leave the world with the greater certainty of all their sins being forgiven, and before any new guilt could be contracted.

A superstitious use was early made of the *sign of the cross*. It seems to have originated among the Montanists. Tertullian boasts of it thus, "In the beginning of any business, going out, coming in, dressing, washing, eating, lighting candles, going to bed, sitting down, or whatever we do, we sign our forehead with the sign of the cross." It was thought to be a defence against enchantments and evil spirits. The use of this sign came more into fashion after Constantine employed it in his imperial standard. So high did it rise in later times, that the papists maintain that the cross, and even the sign of the cross, is to be worshipped with the highest kind of adoration.

Furthermore, a sanctifying virtue was ascribed to *holy water*, or salt and water consecrated by the bishop—an idea of pagan extraction. An extraordinary power was also ascribed to *lights* burning in the day time, to *incense*, to the *relics* of saints, and their *images*, and to little waxen images of a lamb, that were called *Agnus Dei's*. Yet greater efficacy was attributed to *pilgrimages* to visit particular churches and holy places, and to *attendance* on particular ceremonies. Hence the foundation of those *jubilees* and *festivals*, described in another part of this work. All the popish sacraments are likewise certain ceremonies, to the use of which the members of the catholic church ascribe a supernatural and sanctifying effect upon the mind; and they suppose them to have that weight and influence with the Divine Being, which nothing but real virtue, or good dispositions of mind can ever have.

*Almsgiving* likewise and donations to churches were supposed to be available to prevent future punishment. Bodily *austerities*, *fasting*, *celibacy*, were in high estimation, as propitiating the favor of God and securing eternal life. Great stress was also laid on *contemplation*, to which *solitude* was favorable.

As illustrations of the mistakes in respect to virtue, and the value attached to what was outward in those times, the following facts may be related, and they are only a small specimen of the whole.



Some of the Mystics of the fifth century not only lived among the wild beasts, but also after their manner. They ran naked through the desert with a furious aspect. They fed on grass and wild herbs, avoided the sight and conversation of men, remained motionless in certain places for several years, exposed to the rigor and inclemency of the seasons; and towards the conclusion of their lives, shut themselves up in narrow and miserable huts. One Simon, a Syrian, in order perhaps to climb as near to heaven as he could, passed thirty-seven years of his wretched life upon five pillars, of six, twelve, thirty-two, thirty-six, and lastly forty cubits high. Others followed his example; and, of all the instances of superstitious frenzy, none were held in higher veneration than this, and the practice continued in the East till the twelfth century.

Dominic for many years had next to his skin an iron coat of mail, which he never put off but for the sake of flagellation. He seldom passed a day without chanting two psalters, at the same time whipping himself with both his hands; and yet this was his time of greatest relaxation. For in Lent, and while he was performing penance for other persons, he would repeat at least three psalters a day, whipping himself at the same time. He would often repeat two psalters without any interval between them, without even sitting down, or ceasing for one moment to whip himself.

Peter Damiani asking him one day if he could kneel with his coat of mail, he said, "When I am well I make a hundred genuflections every fifteenth psalm, which is a thousand in the whole psalter; and one time he told his master that he had gone through the psalter eight times in one day and night; and at another time, trying his utmost, he repeated it twelve times, and as far as the psalm which begins with *Beati Quorum* of the thirteenth. And in repeating the psalter he did not stop at the hundred and fifty psalms, but added to them the canticles, the hymns, the creed of St Athanasius, and the litanies, which are to be found at the end of the old psalters. His fasting and his coat of mail made his skin as black as a negro, and besides this he wore four iron rings, two on his thighs, and two on his legs, to which he afterwards added four others; and besides this iron shirt he had another under him to sleep upon. Notwithstanding these severities, he died very old on the

14th of October, 1062, which day is dedicated to his honor in the calendar of the church of Rome.

The *Quietists*, who arose in 1688 and gave great trouble to the church of Rome, held that the christian religion consisted neither in knowledge nor practice, but in certain internal feelings or divine impulses.

The casuistry of the *Jesuits* was proverbial as sapping the foundations of morality and religion. Amongst other principles, they held that it was lawful to do evil that good might come; that it was a matter of indifference what motives determined the actions of men; and that even an oath might be taken with mental additions and reservations.

The doctrine was once held and practised in the church of Rome, that no faith was to be kept with heretics.

It is to be hoped, that catholics do not lay the stress they have been formerly taught to do on things foreign to real virtue, that is, to good dispositions of mind, and a good conduct in life; as it is to be lamented, that many protestants are far from being free from all superstition in these respects. But now that the minds of men seem to be so well opened to the admission of religious truth in general, errors so fundamental as these which relate to *morality*, will hardly remain long without redress. It will be happy if the reformation of christians in doctrine and discipline be followed by a suitable reformation in practice.

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## P A R T X.

THE HISTORY OF MINISTERS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,  
AND ESPECIALLY OF BISHOPS.

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### THE INTRODUCTION.

THE christian church was served originally (exclusive of the apostles and other temporary officers) by *Elders* and *Deacons* only; the former being appointed for spiritual matters, and the latter for civil affairs. They were all chosen by the people, and were ordained to their office by prayer, which, when it was made on the behalf of any particular person, was in early times always accompanied with the

imposition of hands. For the sake of order in conducting any business that concerned the whole society, one of the elders was made *president* or *moderator* in their assemblies, but without any more power than that of having a single vote with the rest of his brethren. From this simple constitution, it is certainly astonishing to consider how these *servants of the church*, came in time to be the *lords of it*, and of the world; and it is curious to observe the various steps by which this change was made.

## SECTION I.

### THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS, TILL THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

THE first change in the constitution of the primitive churches, was making the most distinguished of the elders to be *constant president*, or moderator, in their assemblies, and appropriating to him the title of *episcopos*, or *bishop*, which had before been common to all the presbyters or elders, but without giving him any peculiar power or authority.

It was early found necessary to educate the ministers of religion, and schools were accordingly erected for that purpose, among which that at Alexandria, in Egypt, founded on the plan of those of the Greek philosophers, was very famous.

An important change of early date was the exaltation of presbyters into the rank of bishops, which gradually took place on account of the branching out of large individual churches into several colonies, or dependent churches, over all which the bishop of the mother church bore rule. Thus in the beginning of the fourth century, Rome contained twenty-five parishes, over each of which was placed a priest, but all were subject to the *diocesan bishop*.

There is evidence enough, showing that the bishops and presbyters were originally the same order of men, though it has been a subject of much controversy between the church of England and the Dissenters.

Chrysostom says that when the apostle Paul gave orders to Titus i. 5. to ordain *elders* or *presbyters* in every city, he meant *bishops*. Theophylact says that each city was to have its own pastor, and that by *presbyters* in this place the apostle meant *bishops*. Oecumenius and Theodoret

simply as much. Jerome, on the epistle to Titus, says, that among the ancients, *priests* and *bishops* were the same.

At first bishops were appointed by the whole congregation, consisting of *clergy* and *laity*, as they were afterwards called, nor did any church apply to the neighboring bishops to assist at the ordination. Afterwards, they were invited to be present through courtesy, and to reciprocate friendly feelings with the new incumbent. From being *customary*, their attendance was at last deemed *necessary*, and it was thought the ceremony could not be performed without the concurrence of at least three.

The usual ceremony in appointing a bishop was the *imposition of hands*, which was originally only a gesture, indicating the person who was particularly prayed for. Instead of *imposition of hands*, at Alexandria, they only placed the bishop on his chair of office.

Though no distinction originally existed between presbyters or elders, and bishops, one was made in the course of time; and the bishops began to appropriate certain functions to themselves. They enjoyed exclusively the power of *confirming* the baptized, when *chrism* was applied. The idea, that the ministers of Christ succeeded to the Jewish priesthood, with its orders of *high priests*, *priests*, and *Levites*, led to the increased honor and profit of the clergy, and favored the existence of different orders among them. Their assembling in synods was also a great cause of the clergy being distinguished from the people, and the bishops from the presbyters. For the more orderly holding of these assemblies, some one bishop was employed by common consent to summon, and preside in them; and this being generally the bishop of the metropolis, he was called the *metropolitan*, or *archbishop*, a term first used by Athanasius, but common in the church after 430.

The clergy of several provinces appointed officers of more extensive jurisdiction, whom they called *patriarchs* or *primates*. This word was applied to the five principal sees, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. These patriarchs came in time to be distinguished by peculiar rights and privileges.

In consequence of these changes, there did not remain a shadow of the ancient constitution of the church at the end of the fourth century; the privileges of the people and the presbyters being usurped by the bishops, who did not fail

to assume the state suited to their distinctions. A spirit of pride and ambition, against which our Savior had earnestly cautioned his disciples, possessed many of the Christian bishops. Their wealth and power in the larger sees made them resemble princes. "Make me bishop of Rome," said Pretextatus, consul elect, to one who pressed him to embrace Christianity, "and I will be a Christian." It was deemed inconsistent with the clerical office to engage in secular affairs, but this was more than made up by the power given to the ministers and bishops to enforce the rules of church discipline. Once having tasted of civil authority, they acquired such a love of it, as needed early to be checked.

The regulation of ecclesiastical affairs was during this period thought to be properly lodged in the hands of the supreme civil power. Constantine made many laws in ecclesiastical matters, as concerning the age, qualifications, and duties of the clergy; and Justinian added many more. The emperors were accustomed to call councils and preside in them.

In many cases opulent laymen enjoyed some ecclesiastical power, as the appointment of bishops. The right of *patronage* was introduced in the fourth century to encourage the rich to erect churches.

The idea arose in this period, that it was not quite proper for the clergy to marry, certainly not proper to marry twice. The council of Nice ordered that priests who were not already married should abstain from it. A synod held at Elvira, in Spain, enjoined celibacy on priests, deacons, and sub-deacons. However, notwithstanding these and other regulations, the marriage of priests was not uncommon in many parts of the Christian world, quite down to the reformation.

The clergy were often very ignorant during this period. Agathon, bishop of Rome, excused the want of learning in two of his bishops, whom he sent as legates to a council at Constantinople, saying that to have had a *theologian*, he must have sent to England. Several bishops at the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon could not write, so that other persons signed the decrees for them. Societies of ecclesiastics living with bishops for the purposes of instruction, and partly to imitate the monastic life, laid the foundation for the *canons* and *prebends* of cathedral churches.

## SECTION II.

## THE HISTORY OF THE CLERGY FROM THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST, TO THE REFORMATION.

IN the former period we have seen a very considerable departure from the proper character of presbyters or bishops, in those who bore that title in the christian church. But in this we shall see a much greater departure, and through the increasing ignorance and superstition in the laity, we shall find such a degree of *power* assumed by the clergy, as was nearly terminating in the entire subjection of every thing to their will.

Originally the rite of ordination was simple, consisting of *prayer* and the *imposition of hands*, but changes were introduced; and now priests in the church of Rome have two distinct powers, that of *consecrating*, and that of *absolving*. They are ordained to the former by the delivery of the church vessels, and to the latter by the bishop alone, laying on his hands and saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, &c.*

In this period, the bishops reserved to themselves the exclusive right of *confirming* after baptism.

The priests assumed several new signs, or badges of their office. They borrowed from the Egyptian priests the *shaven head* and *surplices*, and from the Roman augurs, the *crozier*, or *pastoral staff*.

A new order arose in the church called *Cardinals*. As this word means *chief*, or *principal*, it has been supposed that this body sprang out of the twenty-five priests who were placed over as many parishes, into which Rome was subdivided; and that, being next in rank to the bishop of Rome, who was subsequently pope, they rose in rank and wealth as he did. They elect the pope now, and are considered as his great council.

Originally bishops were always chosen by the people, but afterwards the presbyters set aside the vote of the people altogether, and took the power into their own hands.

As bishops became landholders, and therefore of great influence in the State, it was an important matter to the prince, who should be bishop. Charlemagne interested himself much in the elections, and though he did not choose, he retained the right of approving the one elected; which he did by delivering to him the *pastoral staff* and

ring, which was called the *investiture*. Thus began the *rights of investiture*, which was a source of much contention afterwards.

Bishoprics, being virtually at length secular estates, were in some cases transferred, like them, to minors. In 1478, Sextus IV. gave the bishopric of Saragossa to a child six years old. The bishopric of Osnaburg, in Germany, is held alternately by papists and protestants, and was once assigned to the second son of the king of England, while an infant.

In the eighth century, not only private possessions, but royal domains, were made over to ecclesiastics, and monasteries, and thus churchmen became dukes, counts, and marquises, and even commanded armies. In France, the parliaments were composed of the bishops in union with the other *grandeas*. In England, bishops and mitred abbots were called to the great councils of the nation with the barons. And to this day, they are admitted to the house of Lords; which is a great anomaly in a free constitution, for receiving their preferment from the court, and having further expectations from it, they will generally be in its interest, and enemies to the rights of the people.

The bishops served in wars. Barbarians being admitted among the clergy, introduced their habits of hunting and fighting. Jortin says, that in the thirteenth century, it was an axiom that the church abhors the shedding of blood. Therefore the bishops and archbishops went to battle, armed with clubs, and made no scruple to knock down an enemy, and beat and bruise him to death, though they held it unlawful to run him through with a sword!

The bishops encroached more and more on the civil power, and gradually controlled princes themselves in the exercise of their proper authority. To this many circumstances contributed, but nothing more than the admission of the great clergy to seats in the assemblies of the State. The ignorance of the laity also gave great power to the clergy. As these were almost the only people who could read or write, they were universally secretaries, stewards, treasurers, &c. Hence the word *clerk*, which originally signified a clergyman (*clericus*) came to denote an officer in the law.

The Crusades contributed much to the advancement of the clergy; the Crusaders leaving their estates to their

management, and sometimes selling them, in order to equip themselves for those distant expeditions.

The ceremony of *consecration* at the crowning of kings, the power of *excommunication*, even in the cases of princes and emperors, and the *wealth* which fell to the ecclesiastics from the laity, gave churchmen almost unbounded control.

By degrees they rose so much above the civil powers, that they possessed almost entire impunity in the commission of any crimes however enormous. It appears in the reign of Henry III. of England, that more than one hundred murders had been committed by clergymen, whom the secular authority could not bring to justice.

The clergy pretended to have jurisdiction in all cases of *sin*, and thus devised a mantle, which would cover the greater part of human affairs. They made themselves judges in *law-suits*, in *wars*; excommunicated those who refused to pay their *debts*, prescribed the degrees of relationship within which it was lawful to contract *marriage*, and dictated in all things pertaining thereto. They claimed entire jurisdiction in matters of *schism* and *heresy*; in *usury*, in *concubinage*.

One circumstance which contributed much to increase the ambition of the clergy was their not being allowed to marry. They were less attached to their respective countries, and hence made the hierarchy their great object. Celibacy was not imposed however without much opposition. That the motive was not a regard to purity, is evident from its being no objection to priests to keep concubines, even publicly. In the dark ages, the profligacy of the clergy perhaps exceeded that of the laity, as the sacredness of their character gave them a kind of impunity. One Fabricius, in the tenth century, complains of the vices and luxury of the clergy thus. They no longer saluted one another with the title of *brother*, but of *master*. They would not learn any thing belonging to their ministry, but committed the whole to their vicars. Their study was to have horses, cooks, concubines, buffoons, mountebanks; and they have applied to the emperor for leave to hunt all sorts of wild beasts. All writers agree in giving the most shocking pictures of the depravity of all ranks of men at that period.

In the ninth century, the ignorance of the clergy was so



great, that few of them could either read or write. Britain, being removed from the seat of the greatest rapine and profligacy, had a greater proportion of learned clergy than the rest of Europe, in the greatest part of the dark ages; and Ireland had perhaps a greater proportion than Britain, as they had suffered still less by the ravages of the barbarians.

The very corrupt state of the clergy made the monks, and their monasteries, of great value to the Christian world. With them almost all the learning and piety of those ages had an asylum, till the approach of better times.

In the church of England there is a threefold order of ministers, viz. bishops, priests, and deacons. The deacons may baptize and preach, but not administer the Lord's supper; the priests may administer the Lord's supper, and pronounce absolution; and only the bishops confirm baptized persons, ordain ministers, and govern the church.

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## PART XI.

### [ THE HISTORY OF THE PAPAL POWER.

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#### THE INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we consider, that the bishops of Rome were at first nothing more than other bishops, and even in their own church possessed originally no other power than that of admonition and exhortation; it is truly astonishing to see to what a height of authority the *popes*, who are no other than their successors, finally attained. From poverty and persecution they rose to be the greatest of princes and persecutors.

The ground of the papal pretensions was that the popes were the successors of Peter, to whom Christ delivered *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*. But a similar expression was used when he delegated power to the rest of the disciples.—Matt. xviii. 18. Peter certainly never assumed any preeminence over the other disciples. Paul opposed him to his face; and said that he *was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles*. Peter was never probably the proper bishop of Rome, but exercised a general jurisdiction over

the church, an office to which none of the apostles appointed any successors at all.

The title of *Pope* (*Papa*) which means *Father*, was not at first peculiar to the bishop of Rome, but was applied to others; thus Cyprian was called the *pope* of Carthage, and it was not until the seventh century that the bishops of Rome appropriated that title to themselves.

The rise and growth of the papal power presents one of the most astonishing spectacles that history affords, and well deserves to be considered with attention.

## SECTION I.

### OF THE STATE OF THE PAPAL POWER TILL THE TIME OF CHARLEMAGNE.

THE first cause of the increase of power to the popes, was the same that enlarged the authority of the bishops of all the great cities of the empire; in consequence of which they had the power of calling and presiding in the assemblies of bishops within the provinces to which the civil jurisdiction of their respective cities extended. And, by degrees, as has been observed before, they had the power of ordaining the bishops in their provinces, and a negative on the choice of the people.

The bishops of the most important sees were called *patriarchs*, and the bishop of Rome came to be considered as the first in rank, out of respect to the city in which he presided. The proper authority of the bishop of Rome did not originally extend over the whole even of Italy, but only the southern part of it. The power of the bishops of Rome was much increased by the dignity of their city, and the great wealth and vast revenues of that see. As appeals were made in civil affairs to that place, as the head of the empire, it came to be customary to do it likewise in ecclesiastical disputes. The deference, that was at first *voluntary*, soon came to be *expected*, and finally to be *insisted on*, by the Romish see, and the other churches became its tributaries. The Arian, and other controversies, afforded also fine opportunities for the ambitious popes to extend their power. The usurpations were, however, gradual, and the early bishops themselves would no doubt have been shocked, had they seen the length to which their successors would go.

But the papal pretensions did not pass unnoticed or unresisted. The sixth council of Carthage determined that they would withstand the encroachments of the bishops of Rome on their rights and liberties, and sent word to pope Celestine, to forbear sending his officers among them, "lest he should seem to introduce the vain insolence of the world into the church of Christ." Various other councils made decrees to the same effect. But appeals made to Rome from some of the eastern churches paved the way for the attainment of a considerable degree of influence even there.

After the sway of Mahomet was extended over Africa and Asia, there remained only two rival metropolitans, Constantinople and Rome. They were in constant variance. As the emperors resided at that time at Constantinople, that see had the advantage over Rome. The patriarch went so far as to assume the title of *Oecumenical*, or *universal bishop*—which was severely condemned by Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome, as blasphemy, a name invented by the devil, and the forerunner of Antichrist. But not more than eighteen years after that time, Boniface III. obtained from the emperor Phocas the exclusive privilege of holding this very title of *universal bishop*!

It was in the reign of Valentinian III. that by the influence of Leo, the popes gained the greatest accession of power within this period; the emperor extending their authority throughout his dominions, even into Gaul, and ordering that whatever should be done, unauthorized by them, should have no force. The other bishops acquiesced. The popes sent their *vicars* regularly into the provinces whenever an opportunity occurred, and watched eagerly every chance of enlarging their jurisdiction. Spies and informers were kept by them at the court of Constantinople. And finally, they commissioned officers, called *legates*, to that see, to solicit at the court all things relating to the faith and peace of the church, against the heretics of the age.

Changes in political affairs, the fall of the Western Empire, and the unprotected state of the people of Rome and the neighboring districts, favored the growth of the papal power. Its pretensions likewise were put upon a broader basis. Leo the Great was the first who claimed jurisdiction over the other churches, as successor to St Peter. In a synod held at Rome in 494, Gelasius said that the church

of Rome ought not to be preferred before others on account of the decrees of councils, but on account of what Christ said to Peter—*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church.*

The popes did not at first claim *infallibility* as the successors of an infallible apostle, but Agathe said, in a public epistle in 680, that the church of Rome neither had erred, nor could err in any point, and that all its constitutions ought to be received as if they had been delivered by the divine voice of St Peter himself. Ennodius maintained, in the fifth century, that the Roman pontiff was "constituted judge in the place of God, which he filled as the vicerent of the Most High!"

As real power and consequence increased, splendor and titles were proportionably multiplied and enhanced. The popes assumed the pomp of royalty. From the *Pontifex Maximus* of the heathen, they called themselves *Pontiffs*, and their office the *Pontificate*. The epithets of *sovereign prelates*, or *priests*, and *bishop of bishops*, were successively applied to them. The ceremony of *kissing the pope's toe* was introduced in imitation of the heathen custom of showing respect in that way to the *Pontifex Maximus*, who was generally the emperor. This civility, which was at first voluntary, was afterwards claimed as a right even from crowned heads. After his election, the pope was carried on men's shoulders, agreeably to the manner of the northern nations, when they had chosen a new chief or prince. Like other sovereigns, he made use of the plural number in speaking of himself. Other forms and titles, not only of royalty, but of divinity, first assumed by the princes of the East, and then adopted by the Roman emperors, were finally employed by the popes. They also excelled all their brethren in their riches and splendor, which rendered their office a high prize for ambition, and provoked great tumults, and even bloodshed sometimes, on the election of a new pope.

Notwithstanding these great powers, the popes were still regarded as the *subjects* of the emperors, and their election was not valid without the emperor's consent. The temporal princes under whom the popes lived, employed them in embassies, when they thought proper. Even the power of summoning general councils was lodged in the imperial hands during the first five centuries, and other persons

besides the popes, as bishops and emperors, were accustomed to preside in them.

## SECTION II.

THE HISTORY OF THE PAPAL POWER FROM THE TIME OF CHARLEMAGNE TO THE REFORMATION.

ORIGINALLY the election of the Pope was not valid without the consent of the Emperor, but after several changes in the custom, Gregory VII. taking advantage of the disorders of the Empire, finally emancipated the see of Rome from this mark of subjection. In early times, the bishops of Rome were chosen by the people, as well as by the clergy, but Alexander III. established the sole right of election in the college of cardinals. The universal custom of the Popes changing their names upon their election began in 884, when Bocco di Porco, thinking his original name which signified *Hog's Snout*, incompatible with his new dignity, changed it to Sergius.

It is not easy to say whether the spiritual or the temporal power of the Popes was the more extravagant, but the temporal power preceded the spiritual, and laid the foundation for it without doubt. The first large accession was made from the spoils of the Lombards in Italy by Pepin and afterwards by Charlemagne. In 1198, the Popes obtained the sovereignty of Rome, the inhabitants of which had always hitherto acknowledged the Emperor as their temporal prince. From this time, the Pope was as properly independent as any prince in Europe.

After the thirteenth century, the wealth and revenues of the Pope received large additions, partly by the events of war, and partly by the munificence of kings and emperors. The Popes took advantage also of all the divisions in the families of temporal powers to aggrandize themselves. They dictated the choice of kings and emperors, and assumed the character of lords of the universe and arbiters of states and empires. The sovereigns who were refractory under their arbitrary power, they excommunicated from the church, absolving their subjects from allegiance to them and forbidding the common rites of humanity to be paid them. Robert, King of France, not complying with the Pope's decree respecting the dissolution of his marriage, the Pope, for the first time, laid the whole kingdom unde-

this interdict, forbidding all divine service, the use of the sacraments to the living, and of burial to the dead. The people terrified by this order, yielded such implicit obedience, that even the King's own domestics abandoned him, except two or three, and those threw to the dogs every thing that came from his table. No person even dared to eat out of any vessel which he had touched. The King, being reduced to this dismal state, was forced to yield, and cancel his marriage.

So fully was the temporal power of the Popes established, that they alone were thought to have the right of disposing of kingdoms; and they were as regularly applied to for that purpose, as the temporal courts for titles of nobility, &c.

It was in the eleventh century that the power of the Popes may be said to have been at its height. They then received the pompous titles of the *masters of the world*, and of *universal fathers*. They presided every where in the councils by their legates. They decided in all controversies concerning religion, or church discipline; and they maintained the pretended rights of the church against the usurpations of kings and princes.

The insolence with which the Popes have acted in the height of their power is hardly credible. Gregory VII. obliged the Emperor Henry IV. whom he had excommunicated, and who applied for absolution, to wait three days before he would admit him; though both the Emperor, the Empress, and their child, waited barefoot in the depth of winter. On the fourth day he was admitted, and as a token of his repentance, he resigned his crown into the hands of the Pope, and confessed himself unworthy of the Empire, if ever he should oppose his will for the future: and he was not absolved without very mortifying conditions.

In the ninth century, we find the first seeds of the doctrine of the Popes' *infallibility*. They asserted that they could not be judged by any person for what they should do, and that their decrees ought to be preferred to those of the councils. Leo IX. declared that all difficult questions ought to be decided by the successors of St Peter, because that church never had erred from the faith, and would not to the end. The schoolmen gave their influence to the support of this doctrine. But the faith of mankind in the infallibility of the Popes received a severe shock at the time

of the great schism, which could only be settled by setting up a council above the Popes.

The growth of the papal power was luxuriant during the dark ages. Princes were divested of all authority in religious matters. The *decretal epistles* were forged to support the pretensions of the Popes. The quarrels about the right of *investiture*, the custom of granting *indulgences*, the power of *canonization*, of calling and presiding in *councils*, the collecting of the *canons* of the church of Rome, the appropriation of the highest *titles*, even that of God, show very distinctly that they had lost all title to be called the successors of St Peter, and had "introduced the vain insolence of the world into the church of Christ."

There is no giving one character to a set of men so numerous and so various as the Popes have been; but, in general, since they have become sovereign princes, they have had all the follies and vices of other sovereigns, and have spent their revenues in the same manner; more especially (as their power was short, and the office not hereditary) in enriching their families and dependents. At one period they were, for many successions, monsters of wickedness; using every art, and making no scruple even of murder, to gain their ends. A man more abandoned to vice of the most atrocious kinds than Alexander VI. was perhaps never known, and Leo X. the great patron of learning, was exceedingly debauched, and probably an atheist.

It must be acknowledged, however, that many of the Popes have been men who would have adorned any station in life; being, in the worst times, patterns of virtue, and actuated by the best intentions in the world. But they never had power to reform their own courts, or to accomplish the other reformatations they projected. However, time, and the diminution of their power, has at length done a great deal towards it; and as the bishops of Rome sink to the level of other bishops in the Christian church, they will probably acquire the virtues of their primitive ancestors; but then they will be no longer what we now call *Popes*.

## APPENDIX I. TO PARTS X. AND XI.

## THE HISTORY OF COUNCILS.

To the preceding history of the clergy in general, and of the bishops and popes in particular, it may not be amiss to add a separate account of the *councils*, or assemblies of the bishops and clergy, which make a great figure in the history of the christian church. These assumed a most undue authority, and have been one of the principal supports of the greatest corruptions of christian doctrine and discipline.

We find in the book of Acts, that when matters of considerable consequence occurred, all the apostles, or as many as conveniently could, assembled to consult about them, and their decrees were universally received in the christian church. It does not appear, however, that what they resolved on these occasions was directed by any immediate inspiration, for that would have superseded all reasoning and debates upon the subject, and consequently all difference of opinion. Whereas they appear to have debated among themselves, on some of these occasions, with a considerable degree of warmth. And though they conclude their advice to the Gentile christians about the observance of the Jewish ceremonies, with saying that *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us*, they probably only meant, that they were fully persuaded that the regulations which they prescribed were proper in themselves, and therefore agreeable to the mind and will of God; being conscious to themselves that they were under no improper bias. If they had been conscious of any particular illumination at that time, they would probably have mentioned it. Such, however, was the respect in which the apostles were held, that even their advices had the force of decrees, and in general were implicitly conformed to.

When the apostles were dead, it was natural for the bishops of particular churches to assemble on similar occasions; and though they could not have the authority of the apostles, that office becoming extinct with those who were first appointed to it, yet as there was no higher authority in the church, had they contented themselves with merely giving *advice*, and confined their decisions to matters of dis-



cipline, they would hardly have been disputed. But it has been pretended that *general councils*, consisting of bishops assembled from all parts of the christian world, succeed to all the power of the apostles, and have even absolute authority in matters of faith. But an assembly of ever so many bishops, being only an assembly of fallible men, can have no just claim to infallibility; nor indeed was this a thing that was pretended to in early times. Our Lord did, indeed, promise that when two or three of his disciples were gathered together in his name, he would be in the midst of them; but this promise, whatever might be meant by it, was not made to bishops in particular, and might be claimed by two or three individuals, as well as by two or three hundred.

Besides, those *general councils*, the decrees of which have been urged as of the greatest authority, were in fact assemblies of factious men; in whose proceedings there was not even the appearance of their being influenced by the love of truth. For they determined just as the emperors, or the popes who summoned them, were pleased to direct. Accordingly there are, as might be expected, many instances of the decrees of some councils being contrary to those of others; which could not have been the case if they had been all guided by the spirit of truth.

Though Arianism was condemned by the council of Nice, it was established at the council of Arminium, which was as much a general council as the other, and also in the councils of Seleucia and Syrmium. There is also a remarkable instance of the decrees of councils, in which the Popes themselves have presided, contradicting one another, in those of Chalcedon, and Constantinople, in 554. For the former absolved and justified Theodorit of Cyr, and Ibas of Edessa, and received them into their body, as orthodox bishops; whereas the council of Constantinople, which is styled the fifth general council, and was approved by the Pope, condemned them as damnable heretics.

The council of Constantinople also decreed that images were not to be endured in Christian churches, whereas the second council of Nice not only allowed them to be erected, but even to be worshipped. In later times the Lateran council of Julius II. was called for no other purpose but to rescind the decrees of the council of Pisa; and whereas the council of Basil had decreed that a council of bishops is

above the Popes, the Lateran council, under Pope Leo, decreed that a Pope is above a council.

Besides, there never has been in fact any such thing as a general council. Even the four first, which are the most boasted of, had no bishops from several whole provinces in the Christian world. And the council of Trent, the authority of which the papists make so much account of, was perhaps the least respectable of all the councils. The chief intention of the crowned heads who promoted this council, was to reform the abuses in the court of Rome. But the Pope himself, by his legates, presiding in it, pronounced the Protestants, who appealed to it, heretics before condemned by that council, and none were allowed to vote in it, but such as had taken an oath to the Pope and the church of Rome. There were hardly fifty bishops present in it, none being sent from several countries. Some that were there were only titular bishops, created by the Pope for that purpose; and some had Grecian titles, to make an appearance of the Greek church consenting to it. It is also well known that nothing was decided in the council without the previous consent of the court of Rome, and the decrees concluded with an express salvo of all the authority of the apostolical see.

In fact, the papists themselves have found a variety of methods of evading the force of general councils, whenever it has been convenient for them so to do; as, if their decisions depended upon a matter of fact, concerning which they were never pretended to be infallible; also, if their proceedings were not in all respects regular, and if their decrees were not universally received, as well as if they had not been approved by the Popes. If we may judge concerning councils by the things that have been decreed in them, we shall be far from being prejudiced in their favor; their sanction having been pleaded for things the most repugnant to reason and the plainest sense of scripture, as has been sufficiently manifested in the course of this work.

Councils were most frequent in the times of the Christian Emperors at Constantinople, and of the Christian princes of Europe, from the fall of the Roman Empire till towards the end of the eighth century. But the publication of the forged decretals of Isidore at that period made a great change with respect to councils, the jurisdiction of bishops and appeals. For councils became less frequent when they

could not be held without the Pope's leave; and the interruption of provincial councils was a great wound, say Fleury, to ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The first who seems to have maintained the infallibility of councils is Barlaam, who exhorts one of his friends to return to the communion of the church of Rome, because a council at Lyons, being lawfully assembled, and having condemned the errors of the Greeks, he must then be considered as an heretic cut off from the church, if he did not submit to it. But Occam, who lived at the same time, viz. in the fourteenth century, speaks of it as the opinion of some doctors only, while others say this infallibility was the privilege of the college of cardinals, and others of the Pope himself. It was a question, however, that did not begin to be agitated till that time, and it was then disputed very calmly. It was more openly debated during the differences between the Popes and the councils; when this council setting themselves up above the Popes, determined that themselves, and not the Popes were appointed by God to judge in the last resort concerning articles of faith. The council of Constance made no decision on this subject, but that of Basil did, saying that it was blasphemy to doubt that the Holy Spirit dictated their resolutions, decrees, and canons; while the Pope and the council of Florence, declared the contrary, and it is not yet determined which of these was a lawful council.

The most eminent of the catholic writers themselves have maintained different opinions on this subject, and have been much influenced by the circumstances in which they wrote. But this was most remarkable in the case of Æneas Sylvius, who had with great boldness maintained the authority of the council of Basil against Eugenius IV. but being made pope (by the name of Pius II.) he published a solemn recantation of all he had written upon the subject; declaring without shame or hesitation, that Æneas Sylvius was a damnable heretic, but as Pius II. he was an orthodox pontiff. At present the opinion of the infallibility of the Pope being generally given up by the Catholics, they suppose the seat of infallibility (for it is an incontrovertible maxim with them that there must be such a seat) to be in the councils.

The Protestants themselves had originally no dispute about the authority of truly general councils. Luther a

pleaded to a general council regularly assembled, and engaged to abide by its decision. Calvin maintained in express terms, that the universal church is infallible, and that God must annul his solemn promises if it be otherwise.

At present, however, it is not, I believe the opinion of any protestant, that any assembly of men is infallible. But it is thought by some to be lawful and convenient to call such an assembly of divines, to determine what should be the articles of faith in particular established churches, or such as should have the countenance of particular states. The synod of Dort, in Holland, made decrees concerning articles of faith, and proceeded in as rigorous a manner against those who did not conform to them, as any popish synod or council could have done. The time is not yet come, though we may hope that it is approaching, when the absurdity of all interference of *power*, civil or ecclesiastical, in matters of religion, shall be generally understood and acknowledged.

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## APPENDIX II. TO PARTS X. AND XI.

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### OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECULAR POWERS, OR THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE, IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

WE have seen the daring attempts to introduce an arbitrary authority, so as to decide concerning articles of faith, as well as concerning matters of discipline, made first by the popes, who were nothing more, originally, than bishops of the single church of Rome, and afterwards, by councils, or a number of bishops and other ecclesiastical persons. This usurpation led the way to another, not indeed so excessive in the extent to which it has been carried, but much more absurd in its nature. The former usurpations were of the *clergy*, who might be supposed to have studied, and therefore to have understood, the christian system; but the latter is by mere *laymen*, who cannot be supposed to have given much attention to religion, and consequently must be very ill prepared to decide authoritatively concerning its doctrines or rites. Of this nature is the ecclesiastical authority which, upon the reformation, was transferred from the popes to the secular powers of the different states of Europe,

and more especially that which was assumed by the king and parliaments of England.

The Roman emperors, when they became christians, did, indeed, interfere in the business of religion; but it was either to confirm the election of bishops, or to convoke synods, or general assemblies, when, as they apprehended, the peace of the state was in danger of being disturbed by heresies, and factions in the church.

During the middle ages, the civil and ecclesiastical powers were much more intermixed. Though under the papal domination, it was not the state that encroached upon the church, but the church upon the state.

In England, when Henry VIII. shook off his dependence upon the pope in 1531, he was far from abolishing his usurped and antichristian power, but transferred it from the pope to himself, claiming the title of *sole and supreme head of the church of England*. He, Edward VI., Mary, Elizabeth, and Charles I. all published instructions or injunctions, concerning matters of faith without the consent of the clergy, in convocation assembled, and enforced them under severe penalties.

The House of Commons, which took up arms against Charles I. assumed the same authority in matters of religion that had been usurped by the preceding kings. And the presbyterians, of which sect they chiefly consisted, would have enacted some persecuting and sanguinary laws, if they had not been restrained by Oliver Cromwell, at the head of the Independents. These being the smaller number, would certainly have been suppressed by any act of uniformity; and it is not improbable, that, in consequence of being in this situation, they might sooner than any other sect in this country, hit upon the true christian principle of religious liberty, which entirely excludes the civil magistrate from interfering with it. At the restoration, the same church establishment, with the same powers in the king and in the parliament, was resumed; and every thing reverted into the same channel, or nearly the same, in which they had been in the reign of queen Elizabeth.

It is something remarkable, that this glaring impropriety, of merely civil magistrates deciding concerning articles of christian faith, which must necessarily be undertaken by all civil governors who presume to make any establishment of christianity (that is, of what they take to be christianity) in

untry, should not strike more than it generally does ; at on this ground only all civil establishments of christ- should not be exploded ; since all christians profess knowledge no Father besides God, and no Master be- Christ, and to stand fast in the liberty with which he ade us free.

en that law was made, in the reign of William and which makes it blasphemy, punishable with confis- of goods and imprisonment for life, if persisted in, to he doctrine of the Trinity, lord Feversham, who had ection to the doctrine which was to be guarded by .w, expressed his dislike of the civil magistrate inter- to guard it, in very strong terms. He said, that he wledged the houses of parliament might lay upon the t what taxes they pleased, and might even make a but he did not like the idea of a *parliamentary reli-* and a *parliamentary God*. Such, however, in fact, established religion of this country. It is such a re- as the king, lords, and commons of this realm have it proper to make for themselves, and to impose upon ople ; who certainly ought to judge for themselves, atter that so nearly concerns them as individuals, and ich they are as competent judges as their superiors. an usurped authority as this ought to be opposed ; ally when it is considered that the power by which ode of religion is enforced, is precisely the same with f the popes, having been transferred from them to our s.

clusive of every thing contained in the religion of the 1 of England, it is chiefly the *authority* by which it is ed that Dissenters object to in it.

s is the true and solid ground of a dissent from the 1 of England. It is declaring (and it is the only and effectual mode of declaring) that we will ac- edge no *human authority* in matters of religion ; but e will judge for ourselves in a business which so near- cerns us, and not suffer others to judge for us ; and the worship of God, and what respects our happi- a future world, we will only obey him whose power ls to that world, that is *God*, and not *man*.

Simon says there are three popes in Christendom, y, at Rome, in Sicily, and in England ; the two owever, deriving their power from the first, the

kings of Sicily by voluntary concession, and the kings of England by force.

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APPENDIX III. TO PARTS X. AND XI.

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OF THE AUTHORITY OF TRADITION, AND OF THE SCRIPTURES,  
&c.

WE have seen the pretensions of popes, of councils, and also of civil magistrates, to decide controversies of faith. It may not be improper, in the conclusion of this subject, to consider two other authorities, viz: those of *tradition* and of the *scriptures*. As the Jewish and christian religions are of divine origin, it behoves us to examine as carefully as we can, the channels by which these divine communications have been conveyed to us; and these can be no other than *oral tradition* or *writing*; and of these the latter is certainly preferable, whenever it can be had, provided we have sufficient evidence that we have the genuine writings of the inspired prophets themselves. But in many cases even tradition ought not to be slighted.

Those christians who were not converted by the apostles themselves, and who lived before the publication of any of the canonical books of the New Testament, could not have had any other foundation for their faith. We ourselves admit these books to be canonical on no other foundation. We observe the first, and not the seventh day of the week, as a day of rest, contrary to the known custom of the Jews, which we believe to have been of divine appointment, upon no other authority than that of tradition; it being supposed to have been the invariable custom of the church from the time of the apostles, and it being impossible to account for the origin of the present custom, and of its being observed without the least variation in churches that differ in almost every thing else, but upon that supposition. For we do not find in the New Testament, any express order of Christ, or of the apostles, that such a change should be made.

When, therefore, we speak of tradition as an improper foundation for faith and practice, we must mean only pretended, or ill-founded traditions; such as were alleged b

several of those who were called heretics in very early times, or by the church of Rome at present.

The church of Rome has adopted a variety of customs, and founded many claims, upon this authority of tradition. But in what was called the *catholic church*, no recourse was had to tradition before the second council of Nice, in 787, in which the worship of images was established; when many things which had generally been assented to, and practised before that time, had no foundation in the scriptures, or in the reason of things. This council, therefore, expressly anathematized all those who did not receive ecclesiastical traditions, written or unwritten.

The authority of the books of the New Testament, supposing them to be genuine, is the very same with that of the apostles themselves. But, in very early times, this does not appear to have been so great as it came to be afterwards.

Like other credible historians, all the evangelists agree in the main things, but they differ exceedingly in the order of their narrative, and with respect to incidents of little consequence; and to contend for any thing more than this is in effect to injure their credibility. If the agreement among them had been as exact as some pretend, it would have been natural for the enemies of christianity to have said, that they must have been written by combination, and therefore that the history has not the concurrent testimony of independent witnesses; and if the exactness contended for cannot be proved, the authority of the whole must be given up.

The Jews, in forming their canon of sacred books, seem in general to have made it a rule to comprize within their code all books written by prophets; and therefore, though they had other books, which they valued, and might think very useful in the conduct of life, they never read them in their synagogues. These books were afterwards called *apochryphal*, consisting of pieces of very different character, partly historical, and partly moral.

These apochryphal books were not much used by christians, till they were found to favor some superstitious opinions and practices, the rise of which I have already traced, and especially the worship of saints.

The church having afterwards adopted the version of Jerome, which followed the Hebrew canon, the apochryphal



books began to lose the authority which they had acquired ; and it was never fully re-established, till the council of Florence, in 1442 ; and it was then done principally to give credit to the doctrine of purgatory. It was for a similar reason that the council of Trent made a decree to the same purpose.

Notwithstanding the apparently little foundation which many of the popish doctrines have in the scriptures, it was very late before any measures were taken to prevent the common people from using them. Indeed, in the dark ages, there was no occasion for any such precaution, few persons, even among the great and the best educated, being able to read at all. The Sclavonians, who were converted to christianity at the end of the ninth century, petitioned to have the service in their own language, and it was granted to them.

But afterwards, Wratislas, king of Bohemia, applying to Gregory VII. for leave to celebrate divine service in the same Sclavonian tongue, it was absolutely refused. For, said this pope, after considering of it, "it appeared that God chose that the scripture should be obscure in some places, lest if it was clear to all the world, it should be despised ; and also lead people into errors, being ill understood by their ignorance."

The practice of the church of Rome at present is very various. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, and in general in all those countries in which the inquisition is established, the reading of the scriptures is forbidden. France was divided on this subject, the Jansenists allowing it, and the Jesuits refusing it. For the council of Trent having declared the vulgate version of the Bible to be authentic, the Jesuits maintained that this was meant to be a prohibition of any other version.

After the council of Trent this evil was much increased. For the bishops assembled at Bologna, by order of Julius III. advised that the reading of the scriptures should be permitted as little as possible, because the power of the popes had always been the greatest when they were the least read alledging that it was the scriptures which had raised the dreadful tempest with which the church was almost sunk and that no person ought to be permitted to know more of them than is contained in the mass. His successor profit

ed by this advice, and put the Bible into the catalogue of *prohibited books*.

So much were the Roman Catholics chagrined at the advantage which Luther, and the other reformers, derived from the scriptures, that on some occasions they spoke of them with so much indignation and disrespect, as is inconsistent with the belief of their authority, and of christianity itself. Prieras, master of the sacred palace, writing against Luther, advances these two propositions, viz: that the scriptures derive all their authority from the church and the pope, and that indulgences, being established by the church and the pope, have a greater authority than the scriptures.

All the popes, however, have not shown the same dread of the scriptures. For Sixtus V. caused an Italian translation of the Bible to be published, though the zealous catholics were much offended at it.

So much were the minds of all men oppressed with a reverence for antiquity, and the traditions of the church, at the time of the reformation, that the protestants were not a little embarrassed by it in their controversy with the catholics; many of the errors and abuses of popery being discovered in the earliest christian writers, after the apostolical age. But at present all protestants seem to entertain a just opinion of such authority, and to think with Chillingworth, that *the Bible alone is the religion of protestants*.

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## PART XII.

THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTIC LIFE.

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### THE INTRODUCTION.

BESIDES those ministers of the Christian church whose titles we meet with in the New Testament, but whose powers and prerogatives have been prodigiously increased from that time to the present, we find that excepting the *Popes* alone, no less conspicuous a figure was made by other orders of men, of whom there is not so much as the least mention in the books of scripture, or the writings of the apostolical age. I mean the *monks*, and *religious orders*

of a similar constitution, which have more or less of a religious character.

The set of opinions which laid the foundation for the whole business of monkery, came originally from the East, and had been adopted by some of the Greek philosophers, especially Plato, viz. that the soul of man is a spiritual substance, and that its powers are clogged, and its virtues impeded, by its connection with the body. Hence they inferred that the greatest perfection of mind is attained by the extenuation and mortification of its corporeal incumbrance. This notion operating with the indolent and melancholy turn of many persons in the southern hot climates of Asia, and especially of Egypt, led them to affect an austere solitary life, as destitute as possible of every thing that might pamper the body, or that is adapted to gratify those appetites and passions which are supposed to have their seat in the flesh. Hence arose the notion of the greater purity and excellency of celibacy, as well as a fondness for a retired and unsocial life, which has driven so many persons in all ages from the society of their brethren, to live either in absolute solitude, or with persons of the same gloomy turn with themselves. It is the same principle that made Esenes among the Jews, Monks among Christians, Dervises among Mahometans, and Fakirs among Hindoos.

The persecution of Christians by the heathen Emperors, the unsettled state of society, the desire of gaining a kind of martyr reputation by a voluntary abandonment of the world, and some misinterpreted texts of scripture, also had their weight in leading many to embrace a life of solitude and celibacy.

## SECTION I.

OF THE MONASTIC LIFE TILL THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

THERE is always something uncertain and fabulous in the antiquities of all societies, and it is so in those of the monks. The monks themselves acknowledge the first of their order to have been one *Paul*, an Egyptian, who in the seventh persecution, or about the year 260, retired into a private cave, where he is said to have lived many years, unseen by any person, till one Anthony found him just be-

fore his death, put him into his grave, and followed his example.

This Anthony, finding many others disposed to adopt the same mode of life, reduced them into some kind of order; and the regulations which he made for the monks of Egypt were soon introduced into Palestine and Syria by his disciple Hilarion, into Mesopotamia by Aones and Eugenius, and into Armenia by Eustachius bishop of Sebastia. From the East this gloomy institution passed into the West; Basil carrying it into Greece, and Ambrose into Italy. St Martin, the celebrated bishop of Tours, first planted it in Gaul, and his funeral is said to have been attended by no less than two thousand monks. But the Western monks never attained to the severity of the Eastern.

The number of these monks in very early times was so great, as almost to exceed belief. Fleury says, that in Egypt alone they were computed, at the end of the fourth century, to exceed seventy thousand. With this increasing number many disorders were necessarily introduced among them. At the end of the fourth century the monks were observed to be very insolent and licentious; and having power with the people, they would sometimes even force criminals from the hands of justice, as they were going to execution. In the time of Augustine many real or pretended monks went strolling about, as hawkers and pedlers, selling bones and relics of martyrs.

The increase of monks was much favored by the laws of Christian princes, and the encouragement of the Popes, as well as by the strong recommendation of the most distinguished writers of those times.

Many women were ambitious of distinguishing themselves by some of the peculiarities of the monkish life in these early times, devoting themselves, as they imagined, to God, and living in virginity, but at first without forming themselves into regular communities. These early nuns were only distinguished by wearing a veil, that was given them by the bishop of the place.

No perfect uniformity can be expected in the customs and modes of living among men, and least of all men whose imaginations were so eccentric as those of the monks.

The most early distinction among them was only that of those who lived quite single and independent, and those who lived in companies. The latter were called *Canobites*.

in Greek, in Latin *Monks* (though that term originally denoted an absolutely solitary life) and sometimes *friars* from *fratres, freres, brethren*, on account of their living together as brothers in one family. These had a president called *abbot*, or *father*, and the place where they lived was called a *monastery*.

On the other hand, those who lived single were often called *eremites* or *hermits*, and commonly frequented caves and deserts. And some make a farther distinction of these into *Anchorites*, whose manner of life was still more savage, living without tents or clothing, and only upon roots or other spontaneous productions of the earth. In Egypt some were called *Sarabites*. These led a wandering life, and maintained themselves chiefly by selling relics, and very often by various kinds of fraud.

Persons who live in Protestant countries, or indeed in Roman Catholic countries at present, can form no idea of the high respect and reverence with which monks were treated in early times. They were universally considered as beings of a higher rank and order than the rest of mankind, and even superior to the priests; and wherever they went, or could be found, the people crowded to them, loading them with alms, and begging an interest in their prayers.

Towards the close of the fourth century, we find one man, Jovinian, who though he chose that mode of life, was sensible that there was much folly and superstition in it, and taught that all who lived according to the gospel have an equal right to the rewards of heaven; and that those who passed their days in celibacy and mortifications, were not at all more acceptable in the sight of God than those who lived virtuously in a state of marriage. But these opinions were condemned by churches and councils, and he was banished as a heretic.

## SECTION II.

### THE HISTORY OF THE MONKS AFTER THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

THE primitive monks, courting solitude, were equally abstracted from the affairs of the world, and those of the church; and yet, by degrees, a very considerable part of the business in both departments came to be done by them. Various circumstances contributed to this end. The su-

periority of the monks over the clergy in learning gave them great advantage. The strictness of their mode of life ingratiated them with the people. Their efficiency and helpfulness in resisting heresies brought them into the notice and patronage of the church.

Being exempted in process of time from all episcopal jurisdiction, they were distinguished by a boundless devotion to the see of Rome. They gradually were admitted to holy orders, and exercised all the functions of priests. They studied, besides theology, law and medicine, which they did at first for charity, and afterwards continued for interest. They were sometimes taken from the monasteries and placed at the head of armies; and they frequently discharged the functions of ambassadors, and ministers of state. The endowments of monasteries were equal, if not superior, to those of the churches; and the influence of the monks being generally greater with the Popes and kings than the clergy, they used in many places to claim the *tithes*, and other church dues. As they had taken advantage of the ignorance of the priests, and established themselves in places of profit and honor, it was not easy for the regular clergy to maintain their rights and privileges; the consequence was, that continual disputes were occurring between the two bodies. Some time before the reformation, all the clergy, bishops, and universities of Europe were engaged in a violent opposition to the monkish orders. It was in this quarrel that Wickliffe first distinguished himself in 1360, and proceeded eventually to attack the pontifical power itself.

The distinction of *orders* amongst monks began with Benedict of Nursia, who in 529 instituted a new order that made rapid progress in the West, and was much devoted to the interests of Rome. It finally swallowed up nearly all the other denominations of monks.

Notwithstanding their extreme profligacy of manners, their number and reputation in the middle ages were incredible. It was said large armies might be raised from them without any sensible diminution of their number. The heads of rich families were fond of devoting their children to this mode of life; and those who had lived abandoned lives, generally made this their last refuge, and left their estates to the monasteries. Several examples occurred where counts, dukes, and even kings, renounced their

honors, and shut themselves up in monasteries, under the notion of devoting themselves entirely to God. Indeed the height to which superstitious observances and things foreign to real virtue, were carried in those days, would not be credited by us, if they did not rest on the best evidence.

Many causes combined to relax the discipline of the monks; as their number, riches, power, civil disorders, for instance, the invasion of the Normans, their dispersion at the time of the great plague in 1348, their exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, the multiplication of prayers and singing of psalms, leaving them no time for bodily labor, and the introduction of *lay-brothers* into the monasteries. The monastic orders being almost all wealthy and dissolute in the thirteenth century, the *mendicant* or *begging friars*, who absolutely disclaimed all property, were then established by Innocent III. and patronized by succeeding Popes.

The monks of the ancient religious orders fell into great contempt after the introduction of the Mendicants, who filled the chairs in schools and churches, and by their labors supplied the negligence and incapacity of the priests and other pastors. But this contempt excited the emulation of the other orders, and made them apply to matters of literature.

Afterwards the mendicant friars, on the pretence of *charity*, meddled with all affairs, public and private. They undertook the execution of wills, and they even accepted of deputations to negotiate peace between cities and princes. The Popes frequently employed them, as persons entirely devoted to them, and who travelled at a small expense and sometimes they made use of them in raising money. But what diverted them the most from their proper profession was the business of the *Inquisition*. By undertaking to manage this court, they were transformed into magistrates, with guards and treasures at their disposal, and became terrible to every body.

During three centuries the two fraternities of mendicants, the Dominicans and Franciscans, governed with an almost universal and absolute sway both church and state, and maintained the prerogative of the Roman pontiff, against kings, bishops, and heretics, with incredible ardor and success. They were in those times what the Jesuits were afterwards, the life and soul of the whole hierarchy. Among other prerogatives, the Popes empowered them to preach,

to hear confessions, and to pronounce absolutions, without any license from the bishops, and even without consulting them. The Franciscans had the chief management of the sale of indulgences, and the Dominicans directed the Inquisition.

Besides the monks and regulars, there is another sort of religious persons, who, according to their institution, bear the name of St John of Jerusalem, from whom are descended the Knights of Malta; and similar to them were the Knights Templars, and the Knights of the Teutonic order. These orders had their origin in the time of the Crusades, and their first object was to take care of the sick and wounded, and afterwards to defend them. But they distinguished themselves so much in their military capacity, that the order was soon filled with men of a military turn, and at length they were most depended upon for any military service. Thus, from their undertaking the defence of their hospital, they undertook the defence of the Holy Land, and by degrees that of other Christian countries against all Mahometan powers. The Knights of St John were established in 1090, and being driven from the Holy Land, they retired to Cyprus, then to Rhodes, and they are now settled at Malta.

The Knights Templars were established in 1118, taking their name from their first house which stood near the temple in Jerusalem. This order grew very rich and powerful, but withal so exceedingly vicious, and it is said atheistical, that, becoming obnoxious in France, Italy, and Spain, the Pope was compelled to abolish the order in 1312.

The last order of a religious kind, of which I think it of any consequence to give an account, is that of the *Jesuits*, which was instituted by Ignatius Loyola, and confirmed by the Pope, with a view to heal the wounds which the church of Rome had received by the reformation, and to supply the place of the monks, and especially that of the mendicants, who were then sunk into contempt. The Jesuits held a middle rank between the monks and the secular clergy, and approached pretty nearly to the regular canons. They all took an oath, by which they bound themselves to go, without deliberation or delay, wherever the Pope should think fit to send them. The secrets of this society were not known to all the Jesuits, nor even to all those who were called *professed members*, and were distinguished from those



who were called *scholars*, but only to a few of the oldest of them, and those who were approved by long experience. The court and church of Rome derived more assistance from this single order, than from all their other emissaries and ministers, by their application to learning, engaging in controversy, and preaching in distant countries, but more especially by their consummate skill in civil transactions, and getting to themselves almost the whole business of *confession* to crowned heads, and persons of eminence in the state; a business which had before been engrossed by the Dominicans.

The moral maxims of this society were so dangerous and so obnoxious to the temporal princes (added to the temptation of the wealth of which they were possessed) that being charged with many intrigues and crimes of state, they were banished, and had their effects confiscated, first in Portugal, then in Spain, and afterwards in France; and at length the Pope was obliged to abolish the whole order.

The religious orders in general have been the great support of the papal power, and of all the superstitions of the church of Rome, in all ages. The worship of saints, and the superstitious veneration for relics were chiefly promoted by their assiduity, in proclaiming their virtues every where, and publishing accounts of miracles wrought by them, and of revelations in their favor. They were also the great venders of indulgences, the founders of the inquisition, and the great instrument of the papal persecutions. The licentiousness of the monks was become proverbial so early as the fifth century, and they are said in those times, to have excited tumults and seditions in various places.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that notwithstanding the great mischief that has been done to the christian world by the religious orders, they have, both directly and indirectly, been the occasion of some good; and though they were the chief support of the papal power, they nevertheless contributed something to the diminution of it, and to the reformation.

A capital advantage which the christian world always derived from the monks, and which we enjoy to this day, is the use they were of to literature in general, both on account of the monasteries being the principal repositories of books, and the monks the copiers of them, and because, almost from their first institution, the monks had a greater

share of knowledge than the secular clergy. In the seventh century, the little learning there was in Europe, was, in a manner, confined to the monasteries, many of the monks being obliged by their rules to devote certain hours every day to study; when the schools which had been committed to the care of the bishops were gone to ruin.

The cause of literature has also been much indebted to the Jesuits, and more lately to the Benedictines; the members of both these orders having produced many works of great erudition and labor, and having employed the revenues of their societies to defray the expense of printing them.

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## PART XIII.

### THE HISTORY OF CHURCH REVENUES.

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#### THE INTRODUCTION.

In this part I shall exhibit a view of the changes which have taken place with respect to the *revenues of the church*; and shall show by what steps ministers of the gospel, from living on the alms of christian societies, together with the poor that belonged to them, came to have independent and even princely incomes, and to engross to themselves a very considerable part of the wealth and even of the landed property of Europe.

#### SECTION I.

##### THE HISTORY OF CHURCH REVENUES TO THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

In the constitution of the primitive church the apostles followed the custom of the Jewish synagogues, the members of which contributed every week what they could spare, and intrusted it with those who distributed alms. Like the Jews also, the christians sent alms to distant places, and gave to those who came from a distance with proper recommendations.

The church had no other revenues besides these voluntary alms till the time of Constantine.

Under him, christian societies began to acquire worldly honors and riches. In an edict, he gave liberty to all persons of leaving by will to the churches, and especially to that of Rome, whatever they pleased. What had been taken from them in time of persecution, was to be restored, and he ordained that the estates of the martyrs who had no heirs, should fall to them.

By this means, churches had what was called their *patrimony*, and that belonging to Rome was called the patrimony of St Peter, which was very extensive in the sixth century in Italy and other countries. At first christian ministers had no property of their own, but lived on the stock of the church. Gradually they had separate pecuniary interests of their own, and became rich and luxurious.

All the civil affairs of christian societies were at first managed by deacons, but the disposal of the money was in the power of the presbyters, by whose general directions the deacons acted. This power with others was usurped by the bishops, who often embezzled the estates belonging to the churches. Owing to this abuse, stewards were chosen to take care of the temporal affairs, and bishops were restricted to the *cure of souls*.

The distribution of the church stock was the cause of great animosities and contentions between the bishops and the inferior clergy, in which the popes were often obliged to interpose with their advice and authority.

Those corruptions of the clergy which arose from the riches of the church began to be peculiarly conspicuous, when, after the time of Constantine, the church came to be possessed of fixed and large revenues. Jerome says, that the church had indeed become more rich and powerful under the christian emperors, but less virtuous; and Chrysostom says that the bishops forsook their employments to sell their corn and wine, and to look after their glebes and farms, besides spending much time in lawsuits. Augustine was very sensible of this, and often refused inheritances left to his church, giving them to the lawful heir, and he would never make any purchases for the use of his church. Jerome says that the priests of his time spared no tricks or artifices to get the estates of private persons;

and he mentions many low and sordid offices, to which priests and monks stooped, in order to get the favor and the estates of old men and women, who had no children.

The disorders of the clergy must have been very great in the time of Jerome, since the emperors were then obliged to make many laws to restrain them. In 370 Valentinian made a law to put a stop to the avarice of the clergy, forbidding priests and monks to receive any thing, either by gift or will, from widows, virgins, or any women. Twenty years after he made another law, to forbid deaconesses to give or bequeath their effects to the clergy, or the monks, or to make the churches their heirs; but Theodosius revoked that edict. We may form some idea of the riches of the church of Rome towards the middle of the third century, from this circumstance, that in that time, according to Eusebius, it maintained one thousand five hundred persons, widows, orphans and poor; and it had then forty-six priests, besides the bishop and other officers.

## SECTION II.

### THE HISTORY OF CHURCH REVENUES AFTER THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

UPON the invasion of the Roman empire by the Norman nations, both the ecclesiastical laws and revenues underwent a great alteration, and upon the whole very favorable to the church, as a political system, though for some time, and in some cases, it was unfavorable to the clergy.

About this time, however, began the custom of granting estates to ecclesiastical persons in the same manner, and upon the same terms, as they had been granted to laymen; the ecclesiastics swearing fealty and allegiance for them, and rendering the same services that the lay lords rendered for their estates. Hence the term *benefice* came to be applied to church livings. For that term was originally applied to estates granted to laymen upon condition of military service.

In no part of the world were the clergy so great gainers by this system as in Germany, where whole principalities were given to churches and monasteries; whereby bishops became, in all respects, independent sovereign princes, as they are at this day.

In those times of confusion, when property in land, and

every thing else, was very precarious, many persons chose to make over the property of their estates to churches and monasteries, obtaining from them a lease for several lives.

The possession of benefices was attended, however, with one incumbrance, from which the church did not very soon free itself. According to the ancient feudal laws, when a tenant died, the lord enjoyed the revenues till his successor was invested, and had sworn fealty; and it was natural that this law should affect churchmen as well as laymen. This was called *regale*.

By degrees, however, the estates which had been long in the possession of the clergy began to be considered as so much theirs, and the temper of the times was so favorable to the claims of the church, that it was thought wrong for laymen to meddle with any part of it; and many princes were induced to relinquish the right of *regale*.

The holy wars in the eleventh century were the cause of great accessions of wealth to the church. Most of the Knights made their wills before their departure, and never failed to leave a considerable share of their possessions to the church; and they built churches and monasteries with ample endowments at their return, by way of thanksgiving for their preservation: so that whether they returned or not, the church generally received some permanent advantage from the expedition.

One of the most valuable acquisitions to the revenues of the church, but from the nature of it the most impolitic in various respects, and the most burthensome to the state, is that of *tithes*. It is a great discouragement to the improvement of land, that a tenth part of the clear produce, without any deduction for the advanced expense of raising that produce, should go from the cultivator of the land to any other person whatever. It would be far better to lay an equivalent tax upon all estates, cultivated or not cultivated. For then it would operate as a motive to industry; whereas the present mode of taxation is a discouragement to it. Besides, this method of paying the minister is a continual source of dispute between the clergy and the parishioners, which is of a most pernicious nature; making the people consider as enemies those whom they ought to respect as their best friends, and in whom they ought to repose the greatest confidence.

The original reason for the payment of tithes was the most groundless imaginable, as it rose from considering christian ministers as an order of men who succeeded to the rights of the *priests* under the Jewish law.

For some centuries, however, it was usual to give tithes to the poor, and for other charitable purposes. At the reformation, though those who took the lead in it were sincerely disposed to abolish tithes, they found themselves obliged to continue, and to secure them by act of parliament, in order to conciliate the minds of the popish clergy. Thus this most intolerable evil continues to this day, whereas in other protestant countries, and especially in Holland, the civil magistrates have adopted a wiser plan, by allowing their ministers a fixed stipend, paid out of the public funds.

The progress of superstition in the dark ages supplied many resources for the augmentation of the wealth of the clergy. In those times the world was made to believe that by virtue of a number of masses, the recitation of which might be purchased with money, and especially with permanent endowments to churches and monasteries, souls might be redeemed out of purgatory; and scenes of visions and apparitions, sometimes of souls in torment, and sometimes of souls delivered from torment, were published in all places.

It was the fate of this country to suffer more from papal usurpation than almost any other part of Christendom. One tax to the church of Rome was peculiar to this country, which was *Peter pence*, or a tax of a penny a year for every house in which there were twenty penny-worth of woods.

So far did the popish exactions in this country, on one account or other, go, that, in the reign of Henry III. the Dopes received from England more than the king's revenue, or one hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

Notwithstanding the ample revenues of many churches, numbers of the clergy contrived to make large additions to them, by appropriating to themselves the emoluments of several church livings; though they could not reside, and do duty at them all, and nothing could be more contrary to the natural reason of things, or the original constitution of the christian church.

About the year 500, when what we now call *benefices*,

came into use, it became customary to ordain without any title, or designation to a particular cure; and many persons got themselves ordained priests for secular purposes. This corruption had arisen to a most enormous height before the council of Trent.

The consequence of titular ordination was *non-residence*, and where curates were employed the principal could follow his other business. Accordingly the bishops in France, and even the parish priests, substituting some poor priests in their room, passed much of their time at court. And if a bishop could hold one living without residing upon it, it was plain that he might hold two or more, and get them supplied in the same manner.

Titular ordinations, however, which first introduced *non-residence*, were not the only cause of *pluralities*, which are said to have had their origin about the sixth century. Among benefices bestowed upon the churches, some, as prebends, &c. had no *cure of souls* annexed to them. These were judged capable of being held by priests who had other livings with cure of souls. The cardinal of Lorraine, who held some of the best benefices in France, and some in Scotland, too, was particularly vehement in his declaration against pluralities in general, at the council of Trent, without imagining that his own were liable to any objection.

The first account of any flagrant abuse of pluralities occurs in the year 936, when Manesseh, bishop of Arles, obtained of his relation, Hugh, king of Italy, several other bishoprics, so that in all he had four or five at the same time. Baronius says, that this was a new and great evil, which began to stain the church of God, and by which it has been wonderfully afflicted.

A person is said to hold a church in *commendam*, when he is empowered to have the care and the profits of it till the appointment of another incumbent. In England, in which every abuse and imposition in ecclesiastical matters were carried to the greatest extent, the richest and best benefices were engrossed by the pope, and given in *commendam* to Italians, who never visited the country, but employed questors to collect their revenues.

Other methods of making pluralities, and disposing of church revenues, were contrived by the court of Rome, such as *provisions* and *exemptions*, which are hardly worth de-

ing, and selling the reversion of livings, called *expectations*, as well as livings actually vacant.

It is to be lamented that these abuses were not corrected by the reformation of the church of England. On the contrary it is apprehended that many of them are increased since that period, so as to exceed what is generally to be found of that nature in some Roman Catholic countries. In consequence of this, though the funds for the maintenance of the clergy are sufficiently ample, the inequality in distribution of them is shameful, and they bear no proportion to the services or merit of those who receive them. This is an evil that calls loudly for redress, and strikes every person who give no attention to articles of faith, or discipline in other respects. Probably, however, this evil will be tolerated, till the whole system be reformed, or destroyed. But without the serious reformation of this and other crying abuses, the utter destruction of the present monarchy must, in the natural course of things be expected.

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## THE GENERAL CONCLUSION.

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CONTAINING CONSIDERATIONS ADDRESSED TO UNBELIEVERS,  
AND ESPECIALLY TO MR GIBBON.

To consider the system (if it may be called a *system*) of Christianity *a priori*, one would think it very little liable to objection or abuse. The great outline of it is, that the universal parent of mankind commissioned Jesus Christ, to teach men to the practice of virtue, by the assurance of his mercy to the penitent, and of his purpose to raise to immortality and happiness all the virtuous and the good, but to inflict an adequate punishment on the wicked. In proof of this he wrought many miracles, and after a public execution he rose again from the dead. He also directed that converts to his religion should be admitted by *baptism*, and that his disciples should eat bread and drink wine in commemoration of his death.



Here is nothing that any person could imagine would lead to much subtle speculation, at least such as could excite much animosity. The doctrine itself is so plain, that one would think the learned and the unlearned were upon a level with respect to it. And a person unacquainted with the state of things at the time of its promulgation, would look in vain for any probable source of the monstrous corruptions and abuses which crept into the system afterwards. Our Lord, however, and his apostles, foretold that there would be a great departure from the truth, and that something would arise in the church altogether unlike the doctrine which they taught, and even subversive of it.

In reality, however, the causes of the succeeding corruptions did then exist; and accordingly, without any thing more than their natural operation, all the abuses arose to their full height; and what is more wonderful still, by the operation of natural causes also, without any miraculous interposition of providence, we see the abuses gradually corrected, and christianity recovering its primitive beauty and glory.

The causes of the corruptions were almost wholly contained in the established opinions of the heathen world, and especially the philosophical part of it; so that when those heathens embraced christianity they mixed their former tenets and prejudices with it. Also, both Jews and heathens were so much scandalized at the idea of being the disciples of a man who had been crucified as a common malefactor, that christians in general were sufficiently disposed to adopt any opinion that would most effectually wipe away this reproach.

The abuses of the *positive institutions* of Christianity, monstrous as they were, naturally arose from the opinion of the purifying and sanctifying virtue of rites and ceremonies, which was the very basis of all the worship of the heathens; and they were also similar to the abuses of the Jewish religion. We likewise see the rudiments of all the *monkish austerities* in the opinions and practices of the heathens, who thought to purify and exalt the soul by macerating and mortifying the body.

As to the abuses in the *government of the church*, they are as easily accounted for as abuses in civil government; worldly minded men being always ready to lay hold of ev-

ery opportunity of increasing their power ; and in the dark ages too many circumstances concurred to give the Christian clergy peculiar advantages over the laity in this respect.

Upon the whole, I flatter myself that, to an attentive reader of this work, it will appear, that the corruption of Christianity, in every article of faith or practice, was the natural consequence of the circumstances in which it was promulgated ; and also that its recovery from these corruptions is the natural consequence of different circumstances.

**BUT UNBELIEVERS, IF THEY CAN, ACCOUNT AS WELL FOR THE FIRST RISE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY ITSELF.**

The circumstances that Mr Gibbon enumerates as the immediate *causes* of the spread of Christianity were themselves *effects*, and necessarily required such causes as, I imagine, he would be unwilling to allow. The revolution produced by Christianity in the opinions and conduct of men, as he himself describes it, was truly astonishing ; and this, he cannot deny, was produced without the concurrence, nay notwithstanding the opposition, of all the civil powers of the world ; and what is perhaps more, it was opposed by all the learning, genius, and wit of the age too.

Of all mankind, the Jews were the most unlikely to set up any religion, so different from their own ; and as unlikely was it that other nations, and especially the polite and learned among them, should receive a religion from Jews, and those some of the most ignorant of that despised nation.

Let Mr Gibbon recollect his own idea of the Jews, which seems to be much the same with that of Voltaire, and think whether it be at all probable, that they should have originally invented a religion so essentially different from any other in the world, as that which is described in the books of Moses ; that the whole nation should then have adopted without objection, what they were afterwards so prone to abandon for the rites of any of their neighbors ; or that when, by severe discipline, they had acquired the attachment to it which they are afterwards known to have done, and which continues to this day, it be probable they would have invented, or have adopted another, which they conceived to be so different from, and subversive of their own. If they had been so fertile of invention, it might have been expected that they would have struck out some other since the time of Christ, a period of near two thousand years.

Let Mr Gibbon, as an historian, compare the rise and

progress of Mahometanism, with that of Judaism, or Christianity, and attend to the difference. Besides the influence of the *sword*, which Christianity certainly had not, Mahometanism stood on the basis of the Jewish and Christian revelations. If these had not been firmly believed in the time of Mahomet, what credit would his religion have gained? In these circumstances he must have invented some other system, which would have required *visible miracles* of its own, which he might have found some difficulty in passing upon his followers; though they were in circumstances far more easy to be imposed upon than the Jews or the heathens, in the time of our Savior. This was an age of light and of suspicion; the other, if any, of darkness and credulity. That Christianity *grew up in silence and obscurity*, as Mr Gibbon says, is the very reverse of the truth. He could not himself imagine circumstances in which the principal facts on which Christianity is founded should be subject to a more rigid scrutiny. *These things*, as Paul said to king Agrippa, *were not done in a corner.*— Acts xxvi. 26.

It appears to me, that, admitting all the miraculous events which the evangelical history asserts, it was not probable that Christianity should have been received with less difficulty than it was; but without that assistance, absolutely impossible for it to have been received at all.

Mr Gibbon mentions the *zeal* of the primitive christians, and the strictness of their *discipline*, as causes of the spread of the new religion. But he should have told us whence came that zeal, and that strictness of discipline. If no sufficient *cause* of it had appeared, their zeal would have exposed them to contempt; and their discipline would have discouraged rather than have invited proselytes.

It is acknowledged that to be a christian a man must believe some facts that are of an extraordinary nature, such as we have no opportunity of observing at present. But those facts were so circumstanced, that persons who cannot be denied to have had the best opportunity of examining the evidence of them, and who, if they had not been true, had no motive to pay any regard to them, could not refuse their assent to them; that is, it was such evidence as we ourselves must have been determined by, if we had been in their place; and therefore, if not fully equivalent to the evidence of our own senses at present, is,

at least all the evidence that, at this distance of time, we can have in the case. It goes upon the principle that human nature was the same thing then that it is now; and certainly in all other respects it appears to be so.

That miracles are things in themselves possible, must be allowed so long as it is evident that there is in nature a power equal to the working of them. And certainly the power, principle, or being, by whatever name it be denominated, which produced the universe, and established the laws of it, is fully equal to any occasional departures from them. The object and use of those miracles on which the christian religion is founded, is also maintained to be consonant to the object and use of the general system of nature, viz: the production of happiness. We have nothing, therefore, to do, but to examine, by the known rules of estimating the value of testimony, whether there be reason to think that such miracles have been wrought, or whether the evidence of christianity, or of the christian history, does not stand upon as good ground as that of any other history whatever.

I am sorry to have occasion to admonish Mr Gibbon, that he should have distinguished better than he has done between christianity itself, and the corruptions of it. A serious christian strongly attached to some particular tenets, may be excused if, in reading ecclesiastical history, he should not make the proper distinctions; but this allowance cannot be made for so cool and philosophical a spectator as Mr Gibbon.

He should not have taken it for granted, that the doctrine of three persons in one God, or the doctrine of atonement for the sins of all mankind, by the death of one man, were any parts of the christian system; when, if he had read the New Testament for himself, he must have seen the doctrine of the proper unity of God, and also that of his free mercy to the penitent, in almost every page of it. As he does speak of the corruptions of christianity, he should have examined farther both as an historian, and as a man; for as an individual, he is as much interested in the inquiry as any other person; and no inquiry whatever is so interesting to any man as this is.

Mr Gibbon has much to learn concerning the gospel before he can be properly qualified to write against it. Hitherto he seems to have been acquainted with nothing but the

corrupt establishments of what is very improperly called christianity; whereas it is incumbent upon him to read and study the New Testament for himself. There he will find nothing like Platonism, but doctrines in every respect the reverse of that system of philosophy, which weak and undistinguishing christians afterwards incorporated with it.

Had Mr Gibbon lived in France, Spain, or Italy, he might with the same reason have ranked the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the worship of saints and angels among the essentials of christianity, as the doctrines of the trinity and of the atonement.

The friends of genuine, and I will add of rational christianity, have not, however, on the whole, much reason to regret that their enemies have not made these distinctions; since, by this means we have been taught to make them ourselves; so that christianity is perhaps as much indebted to its enemies, as to its friends, for this important service. In their indiscriminate attacks, whatever has been found to be untenable has been gradually abandoned, and I hope the attack will be continued till nothing of the wretched outworks be left; and then, I doubt not, a safe and impregnable fortress, would be found in the centre, a fortress built upon a rock, against which *the gates of death will not prevail*.

## THE APPENDICES.

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### APPENDIX A.—p. 14.

CHRISTIANITY, it must be remembered, was planted and grew up amidst sharp-sighted enemies, who overlooked no objectionable part of the system, and who must have fastened with great earnestness on a doctrine involving such apparent contradictions as the trinity. We cannot conceive an opinion, against which the Jews, who prided themselves on an adherence to God's unity, would have raised an equal clamor. Now, how happens it, that in the apostolic writings, which relate so much to objections against Christianity, and to the controversies which grew out of this religion, not one word is said, implying that objections were brought against the gospel from the doctrine of the trinity, not one word is uttered in its defence and explanation, not a word to rescue it from reproach and mistake? This argument has almost the force of demonstration. We are persuaded, that had three divine persons been announced by the first preachers of Christianity, all equal and all infinite, one of whom was the very Jesus, who had lately died on a cross, this peculiarity of Christianity would have almost absorbed every other, and the great labor of the apostles would have been to repel the continual assaults, which it would have awakened. But the fact is, that not a whisper of objection to Christianity, on that account, reaches our ears from the apostolical age. In the epistles we see not a trace of controversy called forth by the trinity.—*W. E. Channing.*

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### APPENDIX B.—p. 20

“I would recommend it,” says Dr Priestley to Dr Horsley, “to your consideration, how the apostles could continue

to call Christ *a man*, as they always do, both in the book of Acts, and in their epistles, after they had discovered him to be God. After this it must have been highly degrading, unnatural, and improper, notwithstanding his appearance in human form. Custom will reconcile us to strange conceptions of things, and very uncouth modes of speech; but let us take up the matter *ab initio*, and put ourselves in the place of the apostles and first disciples of Christ.

“They certainly saw and conversed with him at first on the supposition of his being a man, as much as themselves. Of this there can be no doubt. Their surprise, therefore, upon being informed that he was not a man, but really God, or even the maker of the world under God, would be just as great, as ours would now be on discovering that any of our acquaintance, or at least a very good man and a prophet, was in reality God, or the maker of the world. Let us consider, then, how we should feel, how we should behave towards such a person, and how we should speak of him afterwards. No one, I am confident, would ever call that being a *man*, after he was convinced that he was *God*. He would always speak of him in a manner suitable to his proper rank.”

Dr Priestley then makes a similar supposition concerning two men of our acquaintance being discovered to be the angels Michael and Gabriel; and concludes with observing, that if Christ had been God, or the maker of the world, he would least of all have been considered a man in reasoning or argumentation; as is done by St Paul when he says, that *as by man came death, so by man also came the resurrection of the dead*.

“Certainly, Sir, you never attempted to realize the idea, or even thought of putting yourself in the apostles’ place, so as to have imagined yourself introduced into the actual presence of your Maker, in the form of man, or any other form whatever. You must have been overwhelmed with the very thought of it; or if you should have had the courage, and unparalleled self-possession, to bear such a thing, must there not have been numbers who would have been filled with consternation at the very idea, or the mere suspicion, of the person they were speaking to being really God? And yet we perceive no trace of any such consternation and alarm in the gospel history, no mark of astonishment in the disciples of our Lord in consequence of the

belief of it, and no marks of indignation or exclamation of blasphemy, &c. against those who disbelieved it."

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The disciples of our Savior must, at some period, have considered him merely as a man. Such he was, to all appearance, and such, therefore, they must have believed him to be. Before he commenced his ministry, his relations and fellow-townsmen certainly regarded him as nothing more than a man. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph, and of Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" At some particular period, the communication must have been made by our Savior to his disciples, that he was not a mere man, but that he was, properly speaking, and in the highest sense, God himself. The doctrines with which we are contending, and other doctrines of a similar character, have so obscured and confused the whole of Christianity, that even its historical facts appear to be regarded by many scarcely in the light of real occurrences. But we *may* carry ourselves back in imagination to the time when Christ was on earth, and place ourselves in the situation of the first believers. Let us then reflect for a moment on what would be the state of our own feelings, if some one with whom we had associated as a man, were to declare to us, that he was really God himself. If his character and works had been such as to command any attention to such an assertion, still through what an agony of incredulity, and doubt, and amazement, and consternation, must the mind pass, before it could settle down into a conviction of the truth of his declaration. And when convinced of its truth, with what unspeakable astonishment should we be overwhelmed. With what extreme awe, and entire prostration of every faculty, should we approach and contemplate such a being; if indeed man, in his present tenement of clay, could endure such intercourse with his Maker. With what a strong and unrelaxing grasp would the idea seize upon our minds. How continually would it be expressed in the most forcible language, whenever we had occasion to speak of him. What a deep and indelible coloring would it give to every thought and sentiment, in the remotest degree connected with an agent so mysterious and so awful. But we perceive nothing of this state of mind in the disciples of our



Savior; but much that gives evidence of a very different state of mind. One may read over the first three Evangelists, and it must be by a more than ordinary exercise of ingenuity, if he discover what may pass for an argument, that either the writers, or the numerous individuals of whom they speak, regarded our Savior as their Maker and God; or that he ever assumed that character. Can we believe, that if such a most extraordinary annunciation, as has been supposed, had ever actually been made by him, no particular record of its circumstances, and immediate effects, would have been preserved?—that the Evangelists in their accounts of their master would have omitted the most remarkable event in his history and their own?—and that three of them at least (for so much must be conceded) would have made no direct mention of far the most astonishing fact in relation to his character? Read over the accounts of the conduct and conversation of his disciples with their master, and put it to your own feelings, whether they ever thought that they were conversing with their God? Read over these accounts attentively, and ask yourself, if this supposition do not appear to you one of the most incongruous that ever entered the human mind? Take only the facts and conversation, which occurred the night before our Savior's crucifixion, as related by St John. Did Judas believe that he was betraying his God? Their master washed the feet of his apostles. Did the apostles believe—but the question is too shocking to be stated in plain words. Did they then believe their master to be God, when, surprised at his taking notice of an inquiry which they wished to make, but which they had not in fact proposed, they thus addressed him? “Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and that there is no need for any man to question thee. By this we believe that thou comest from God.” Could they imagine, that he, who, throughout his conversation, spoke of himself only as the minister of God, and who in their presence prayed to God, was himself the Almighty? Did they believe that it was the Maker of Heaven and Earth whom they were deserting, when they left him upon his apprehension? But there is hardly a fact or conversation recorded in the history of our Savior's ministry, which may not afford ground for such questions as have been proposed. He who maintains, that the first disciples of our Savior did ever really believe that they

were in the immediate presence of their God, must maintain at the same time, that they were a class of men by themselves, and that all their feelings and conduct were immeasurably and inconceivably different, from what those of any other human beings would have been, under the same belief. But beside the entire absence of that state of mind, which must have been produced by this belief, there are other continual indications, direct and indirect, of their opinions and feelings respecting their master, wholly irreconcilable with the supposition of its existence during any period of his ministry, or their own. Throughout the New Testament we find nothing which implies, that such a most extraordinary change of feeling ever took place in the disciples of Christ, as must have been produced by the communication that their master was God himself upon earth. No where do we find the expression of those irresistible and absorbing sentiments, which must have possessed their minds under the conviction of this fact. With this conviction, in what terms, for instance, would they have spoken of his crucifixion, and of the circumstances with which it was attended? The power of language would have sunk under them in the attempt to express their feelings. Their words, when they approached the subject, would have been little more than a thrilling cry of horror and indignation. On this subject, they did indeed feel most deeply; but can we think that St Peter regarded his master as God incarnate, when he thus addressed the Jews by whom Christ had just been crucified? "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, proved to you TO BE A MAN FROM GOD, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know, him, delivered up to you in conformity to the fixed will and foreknowledge of God, ye have crucified and slain by the hands of the heathen. Him has God raised to life."

*A. Norton.*

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APPENDIX C.—p. 30.

Let us inquire what is the divinity which the scriptures attribute to Jesus Christ. The leading ideas which they inculcate on this point, may be comprehended under the following heads.

1. Jesus is divine, because he came with a divine commission. He was sanctified by the Father, and sent into the world as his immediate messenger. The offices which he bore, for the redemption of the world, were not assumed upon his own authority, but were assigned him by the authority of the Father. He was not like those benefactors, who confer favors upon their country or upon mankind, through the impulses of a patriotic or benevolent spirit; but he was divinely set apart for the momentous service which he was to perform, and received his commission from the inspiration of God.

2. Jesus is divine, because he was divinely instructed. The wisdom with which he spake was not his own, but was given him by his Father. The system of truth, which he revealed, was communicated to him from heaven. His words are to us the words of God, his commands the commands of God; since we believe that God spake by him; intrusted him with his commandments; and taught him the doctrines which he revealed to the world.

3. Jesus is divine on account of the divinity of his character. In his moral excellence he was a ray of the divine brightness, and the express image of the divine perfections. He was sanctified to a degree, which though men may emulate they cannot fully attain. So holy, so spiritual, so divine, was his character, that it conveys to us the best idea we can form of the character of the Deity. In his disposition, his feelings, his affections, he was one with the Father; God dwelt in him, and he in God.

Such is the divinity which the scriptures attribute to our Savior—a divinity of commission, of doctrine, and of character. You may ask, if in addition to this, the doctrine of our Lord's divinity does not imply that he was the true God. By no means. In the first place, this is not required by the meaning of the language. According to the common use of words, there is an important distinction between deity and divinity. We apply the term deity only to the self-existent and independent God. We apply the term divinity to whatever is peculiarly and intimately related to the self-existent and independent God. Thus we speak of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures; meaning, that they contain doctrines which came from God; but we never speak of their deity. We speak of the divinity of the Mosaic dispensation, and of the Christian religion; meaning that they were

established by God; but we never speak of their deity. In like manner, we speak of the divinity of Christ, according to the explanation just given; but never, so long as we abide by the declarations of the Bible, can we speak of the deity of Christ. The Bible constantly observes the distinction between the terms, in its views of our Savior. While it represents him as commissioned, instructed, and sanctified by God, at the same time, it represents him as a different being from God, dependent upon him for his wisdom, authority, and power; and inferior to him, as the being sent is inferior to him who sends; as the son is inferior to the Father; the creature to the Creator.

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You perceive that the doctrine, which we have now presented, is not exposed to the charge of destroying the grounds of Christian hope. We do not "deny the Lord that bought us;" for we believe "that he was sanctified by the Father, and sent into the world." We do not deprive the sinner of his Savior; for we believe that, by the commission of his heavenly father, Jesus is "able to save, to the uttermost, all that come to God by him." We do not make light of the great work of redemption; for we believe that "the Father sent the Son, to seek and save them who were lost;" "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have life." With these views of the mission and character of Jesus Christ, we have a broad foundation for Christian hope. We enjoy the spiritual consolation which the soul needs. We repose with perfect confidence in the promises of our Savior. It is the language of our hearts; "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee; thou only hast the words of eternal life;" believing in thee, "we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."—*George Ripley.*

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APPENDIX D.—p. 52.

When we wish to ascertain the opinions held by a particular church, at any given period, we naturally inquire in the first instance, whether such church had a written creed or formula of faith, and if so, we then refer to such creed as the best authority for what that church did believe.

Now it is in our power to give to the reader the several creeds which were adopted by the church during the first five centuries; and this will enable him to form his own opinion on the subject matter of our inquiry.

In the first century we meet with no other creed than the simple one contained in the scriptures, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah or Christ of God. This creed was the rock on which our Savior assured Peter that he would build his church, and that the gates of hell should never prevail over it.—Matt. xvi. 16–18. It was this creed, which the apostle Peter taught to the assembled Jews on the day of Pentecost.—Acts ii. 36. The apostle John wrote his Gospel for the special purpose of inculcating this simple creed.—John xx. 31. And when the apostle Paul was miraculously converted to a knowledge of the truth, the great burden of his preaching was, to convince his hearers that Jesus was indeed the Christ.—Acts ix. 22.

When converts were made from among the heathens, another article was necessarily added, expressive of the belief in *one* God, even the Father. These two articles constituted the two first in what is commonly called the apostles' creed, and are probably all in that creed which are of apostolical origin.

From the beginning of the second century to the year 325, the creed generally known as the Apostles' Creed, was the rule of faith in the church. This creed reads thus: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into Hell; The third day he rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy Catholic Church; The communion of Saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

We do not give this creed as having been composed by one or more of the apostles; we believe it to be for the most part, the work of a subsequent time. Neither do we give it as having been composed at once, in the form in which it has come down to us; for we believe that several of the articles which it contains were added at different periods,

for the purpose of excluding from the communion of the church those who held opinions which were deemed by the majority to be erroneous. But we consider this creed of importance in the inquiry in which we are engaged, as it shows us what were the opinions held in the church with respect to God and to Jesus Christ during the second and third centuries. There are several other creeds which may be found in the writings of the Fathers, particularly in those of Irenæus and Tertullian; but most, if not all of them are evidently mere glosses or amplifications of the apostles' creed.

In the year 325 was held the famous council of Nice, at which the Nicene creed was framed. This creed is as follows :

“ We believe in one God, Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible : and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of the Father, the only begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father ; by whom all things both in heaven and earth were made, who for us men, and our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate, and made man, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended into Heaven, and shall come again to judge the quick and the dead ; and in the Holy Ghost. And the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes those who say, that there was a time when the Son of God was not ; or that he was made out of nothing, or of another substance or essence, or that he was created, or mutable.”

The fourth and last creed which we shall give is that generally known by the name of the Athanasian. Not that this creed was composed by Athanasius, but because the unknown author, who composed it, in the fifth century, thought proper to give it as the work of that saint, for the purpose of giving it currency. It reads thus :

“ Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.

Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic faith is this, That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity ;

Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

And yet they are not three Almighty, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;

So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another.

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right faith is, that we believe and confess, That our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man ; God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds ; and Man of the substance of his mother, born in the world ;

Perfect God, and perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting ;

Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead ; and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood,

Who although he be God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ ;

One ; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God ;

One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ ;

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead ;

He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty ; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works.

And they that have done good, shall go into life everlasting ; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved."

Here, then, we have the creeds of the Church during the first five centuries. The first thing which will strike every one who peruses them with attention, is the great, the marked difference, which there is in their contents, showing that the belief of the church was essentially different at these different periods. He will also perceive the *gradual transition* which there was from one sentiment to another ; and, as the first creed is avowedly the one held by Unitarians, and the last the one held by Trinitarians, the inference is irresistible that the church which was Unitarian in the



beginning, gradually became Trinitarian. To render this still more clear, we would beg the reader's attention to a few observations on the contents of these several creeds. Of the doctrine of the Trinity, we are constantly told, that it is one of the *fundamental* doctrines of Christianity; one that forms the foundation on which the whole Christian system rests; and a belief in which is absolutely necessary to entitle any one to the name of Christian; and hence, too, this dogma forms one of the most prominent features in the creed of every Trinitarian church. Now of this doctrine, thus declared to be of such vital importance, we do not find even a trace in the creeds of the first three centuries. The terms, Trinity, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, three persons in one God, Consubstantiality, and other terms, indispensably necessary to express this dogma, are no where met with there; nor do we meet there with any expressions, which bear the slightest resemblance to those above enumerated, or which can by any ingenuity be so tortured as to convey the same meaning. The conclusion is therefore irresistible, that these creeds are purely Unitarian, and hence, that the church which had these creeds, and none other, as the universal rule of faith, must have been Unitarian also.

The Nicene creed has been most commonly considered as teaching the doctrine of the Trinity; but this we believe to be a mistake. In that creed the word Trinity is no where found; neither is the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, as a person distinct from the Father, any where asserted in it. It constantly speaks of the Father and the Son as *two* Beings, as perfectly distinct the one from the other, as two men can be. It considers the Father as the self-existing God, and the author of every thing else that exists; and the Son, as a Being who is God of God, that is, God by communication, and who derived his existence from the Father. No where do we find there the *equality* of the Son with the Father asserted. On the contrary every thing leads us to the belief that the Nicene Fathers considered Christ as a Being subordinate to the Father, and dependent on Him. All that they did decree, which in any way approaches Trinitarianism is, that the Son is of the same substance with the Father. That these are not the Trinitarian doctrines of the present day, must be apparent to all; though we ad-

mit that what was settled at Nice ultimately led to the adoption of these dogmas.

The Athanasian is the true Trinitarian creed, and the first in which the doctrine of the Trinity, as now held, is expressly taught. It is the first in which we meet with the term *Trinity*; it is the first which teaches the *equality* of the Son and Holy Spirit with the Father; it is there that we first find it asserted, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each of them God, are each of them eternal, are each of them uncreated, and yet, that these three Persons or Beings (for these words have evidently here the same meaning) are only one Being. Now all this is pure Trinitarianism; and hence the Athanasian creed was adopted, as containing the true faith, in all the Trinitarian churches, and is retained in most of them to this day; and if in some of the Protestant churches this creed is now no longer used, yet there, other creeds of the same tenor, and of nearly the same phraseology, have been substituted for it. Whoever reads the Athanasian creed cannot help observing the very prominent place which the doctrine of the Trinity occupies in it; and this to us is proof that this doctrine at that time was a new one, and hence that so much pains was taken to inculcate it.—*H. E. Huidekoper.*

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#### APPENDIX E.—p. 70.

ALL Trinitarians believe, that Jesus Christ was but *one person*, although possessing *two natures*. Their doctrine is, that one of the three infinite minds in the Godhead was so united to a human soul, as to form one intelligent being, retaining the properties both of the God and of the man.

By the *nature* of any thing we always mean its *qualities*. When therefore it is said, that Jesus Christ possesses both a divine and a human nature, it must be meant, that he possesses both the qualities of God and the qualities of man. But, if we consider what these qualities are, we perceive them to be totally incompatible with one another. The qualities of *God* are *eternity, independence, immutability, entire and perpetual exemption from pain and death, omniscience, and omnipotence*. The qualities of *man* are, *derived existence, dependence, liability to change, to suffering,*

and to dissolution, comparative weakness and ignorance. To maintain therefore, that the same mind is endued both with a divine and a human nature, is to maintain, that *the same mind* is both *created* and *uncreated*, both *finite* and *infinite*, both *dependent* and *independent*, both *changeable* and *unchangeable*, both *mortal* and *immortal*, both *susceptible of pain* and *incapable of it*, both *able to do all things* and *not able*, both *acquainted with all things* and *not acquainted with them*, both *ignorant* of certain subjects and *possessed of the most intimate knowledge* of them. If it be not certain, that such a doctrine as this is false, there is no certainty upon any subject. It is vain to call it a *mystery*; it is an *absurdity*, it is an *impossibility*. According to my ideas of propriety and duty, by assenting to it, I should culpably abuse those faculties of understanding, which have been given me to be employed in distinguishing between right and wrong, truth and error.—*James Yates*.

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If words have any fixed meaning, our Savior expressly disclaims the possession of any attributes strictly and properly divine: as omnipotence—*I can of my own self do nothing*: supreme, infinite goodness—*Why callest thou ME GOOD? there is none good but ONE, that is GOD*: omniscience—*Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the SON, but the FATHER*. This is plain language; there is no mystery or obscurity in it. The terms, *I, me, self*, as every one knows, always denote an *individual* or *person*, and they include the whole of that person; they are not appropriated to any part or member of such person; they comprehend all which goes to constitute him what he is, viewed as an individual or whole. In this sense our Savior must have used them, or he must have been guilty of manifest prevarication. To say that by *self* he meant only the inferior part of his nature, and intended to assert only, that this part was not truly divine, or did not possess, inherently and of itself, infinite power and knowledge, is to make him express himself, as no honest man, not bereft of his sober senses, ever did or ever would.—*Alvan Lamson*.

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WE complain of the doctrine of the trinity, that not satisfied with making God three beings, it makes Jesus Christ

two beings, and thus introduces infinite confusion into our conceptions of his character. This corruption of Christianity, alike repugnant to common sense, and to the general strain of scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth of Jesus.

According to this doctrine, Jesus Christ, instead of being one mind, one conscious intelligent principle, whom we can understand, consists of two souls, two minds; the one divine, the other human; the one weak, the other almighty; the one ignorant, the other omniscient. Now we maintain, that this is to make Christ two beings. To denominate him one person, one being, and yet to suppose him made up of two minds, infinitely different from each other, is to abuse and confound language, and to throw darkness over all our conceptions of intelligent natures. According to the common doctrine, each of those two minds in Christ has its own consciousness, its own will, its own perceptions. They have in fact no common properties. The divine mind feels none of the wants and sorrows of the human, and the human is infinitely removed from the perfection and happiness of the divine. Can you conceive of two beings in the universe more distinct? We have always thought that one person was constituted and distinguished by one consciousness. The doctrine, that one and the same person should have two consciousnesses, two wills, two souls, infinitely different from each other, this we think an enormous tax on human credulity.

We say, that if a doctrine, so strange, so difficult, so remote from all the previous conceptions of men, be indeed a part and an essential part of revelation, it must be taught with great distinctness, and we ask our brethren to point to some plain, direct passage, where Christ is said to be composed of two minds infinitely different, yet constituting one person. We find none. Other Christians, indeed, tell us, that this doctrine is necessary to the harmony of the scriptures, that some texts ascribe to Jesus Christ human, and others divine properties, and that to reconcile these, we must suppose two minds, to which these properties may be referred. In other words, for the purpose of reconciling certain difficult passages, which a just criticism can in a great degree, if not wholly, explain, we must invent an hypothesis vastly more difficult, and involving gross absurdity. We are to find our way out of a laby-

rinth, by a clue, which conducts us into mazes infinitely more inextricable.—*W. E. Channing.*

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APPENDIX F.—p. 86.

It is unjust to the believer in the humanity of Christ, to charge him with regarding Christ as a *mere* man, if by that expression is meant a man no more highly endowed than other men. The humanitarian indeed believes, that *with respect to his nature*, Jesus was truly and simply a man; but he also believes that he was connected with the Deity as no other man was ever connected, that he was intrusted with a mission such as no other man ever held, that he was invested with a superhuman dignity, that he was clothed with divine powers, that he was taught by the Father to speak as never man spake, and was enabled to perform miracles and mighty works, which no man could do unless God were with him; he believes that God has given him a name above every name, except his own most holy name, which he will not give to another, that he has made him the head of his church, and the judge of men; and with this belief he is far from considering the Savior as a *mere* man.—*Unitarian Miscellany*, vol. vi. p. 283.

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APPENDIX G.—p. 89.

THE doctrine of three co-equal persons in one supreme God, and the worship of three co-equal persons, &c. is not the true doctrine nor the true worship, according to the mind of Jesus Christ; but on the contrary, both the doctrine and worship too are false, anti-Christian, polytheistic, and idolatrous, and hath been the true and most woful cause of the great and general apostacy which for many centuries hath reigned through all the Christian world, and hath been and continues to be, a stumbling block to Jews, Turks, and Infidels of all nations.—*Hopton Haynes.*

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“My faith,” complains Henry Martyn, while in Hindostan, “is tried by many things; especially by disputes with the Moonshee and the Pundit. The Moonshee shows re-

markable contempt for the doctrine of the Trinity: 'It shows God to be weak,' he says, 'if he is obliged to have a fellow. God was not obliged to become man, for if we had all perished, he would have suffered no loss. And as to pardon, and the difficulty of it, I pardon my servant very easily, and there is an end. As to the Jewish Scriptures, how do I know but they were altered by themselves? They were wicked enough to do it, just as they made a calf.' In all these things I answered so fully that he had nothing to reply. In the afternoon I had a long argument again with the Pundit. He, too, wanted to degrade the person of Jesus, and said that neither Bramha, Vishnu, nor Seib were so low as to be born of a woman; and that every sect wished to exalt its teacher, and so the Christians did Jesus."

The same devoted missionary, while in Persia, speaks as follows: "The Moollah Aga Mohammed Hasan, a very sensible, candid man—has nothing to find fault with in Christianity, except the Divinity of Christ. It is this doctrine that exposes me to the contempt of the learned Mahomedans, in whom it is difficult to say whether pride or ignorance predominates. Their sneers are more difficult to bear than the brickbats which the boys sometimes throw at me: however, both are an honor of which I am not worthy."

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THE following passage is taken from a letter, written to Dr Ware of Cambridge, by Rammohun Roy, a distinguished Hindoo convert to Unitarianism, who died in England a few years ago: "It is impossible for me to describe the happiness I feel at the idea that so great a body of a free, enlightened, and powerful people, like your countrymen, have engaged in purifying the religion of Christ from those absurd, idolatrous doctrines and practices, with which the Greek, Roman, and barbarian converts to Christianity have mingled it from time to time. Nothing can be a more acceptable homage to the divine Majesty, or a better tribute to reason, than an attempt to root out the idea that the omnipresent Deity should be generated in the womb of a female, and live in a state of subjugation for several years, and lastly offer his blood to another person of *the Godhead*, whose anger could not be appeased except by the sacrifice

of a portion of himself in a human form ; so no service can be more advantageous to mankind than an endeavor to withdraw them from the belief that an imaginary faith, ritual observances, or outward marks, independently of good works, can cleanse men from the stain of past sins, and secure their eternal salvation."

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I AM very desirous to separate the doctrine in question (the Trinity) from Christianity, because it fastens the charge of irrationality on the whole religion. It is one of the great obstacles to the propagation of the gospel. The Jews will not hear of a Trinity. I have seen in the countenance, and heard in the tones of the voice, the horror with which that people shrink from the doctrine, that God died on the cross. Mahometans, too, when they hear this opinion from Christian missionaries, repeat the first article of their faith, "There is one God;" and look with pity or scorn on the disciples of Jesus, as deserters of the plainest and greatest truth of religion. Even the Indian of our wilderness, who worships the Great Spirit, has charged absurdity on the teacher who has gone to indoctrinate him in a Trinity. How many, too, in Christian countries have suspected the whole religion for this one error. Believing then, as I do, that it forms no part of Christianity, my allegiance to Jesus Christ calls me openly to withstand it.

*W. E. Channing.*

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#### APPENDIX H.—p. 155.

WE believe then in the atonement. We believe in other views of this great subject, than those which are expressed by the word *atonement*. But this word spreads before our minds a truth of inexpressible interest. The reconciliation by Jesus Christ, his interposition to bring us nigh to God, is to us his grandest office. To our minds there is no sentence of the holy volume more interesting, more weighty, more precious, than that passage in the sublime Epistle to the Ephesians, "Ye were strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were

far off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ." It is this which the world needed; it is this which every mind now needs, beyond all things,—to be brought nigh to God. By error, by superstition and sin, by slavish fears and guilty passions, and wicked ways, we were separated from him. By a gracious mission from the Father, by simple and clear instructions, by encouraging representations of God's paternal love and pity, by winning examples of the transcendent beauty of goodness, and, most of all, by that grand consummation, DEATH, by that exhibition of the curse of sin, in which Jesus was made a curse for it, by that compassion of the Holy One, which flowed forth in every bleeding wound, by that voice for ever sounding through the world, "Father! Father! forgive them," Jesus has brought us nigh to God. Can it be thought enthusiasm to say, that there is no blessing, either in possession or in the range of possibility, to be compared with this? Does not reason itself declare, that all the harmonies of moral existence are broken, if the great, central, all-attracting Power, be not acknowledged and felt? Without God,—to every mind that has awaked to the consciousness of its nature,—without God, life is miserable; the world is dark; the universe is disrobed of its splendors; the intellectual tie to nature is broken; the charm of existence is dissolved; the great hope of being is lost; and the mind itself, like a star struck from its sphere, wanders through the infinite region of its conceptions, without attraction, tendency, destiny, or end. "Without God in the world"!—what a comprehensive and desolating sentence of exclusion is written in those few words! "Without God in the world"! It is to be without the presence of the Creator in the midst of his works, of the Father amidst his family, of the being who has spread gladness and beauty all around us. It is to be without spiritual light, without any sure guidance or strong reliance, without any adequate object for our ever expanding love, without any sufficient consoler for our deepest sorrows, without any refuge when persecution pursues us to death, without any all-controlling principle, without the chief sanction of duty, without the great bond of existence. Oh! dark and fearful in spirit must we be, poor tremblers upon a bleak and desolate creation, deserted, despairing, miserable must we be, if the Power that controls the universe is not our friend, if God be nothing to us but a mighty and dread ab-



straction to which we never come near; if God be not "*our* God, and our exceeding great reward for ever"! This is the fearful doom that is reversed in the gospel of Christ. This is the fearful condition from which it was his great design to deliver us. For this end it was that he died, that he might bring us nigh to God. The blood of martyrdom is precious; but this was the blood of a holier sacrifice, of innocence pleading for guilt, "of a lamb without spot and without blemish, slain from the foundation of the world."

*O. Dewey.*

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Those Unitarians who reject the popular doctrine of the Atonement, yet attribute an important efficacy to the sufferings and death, as well as the instructions and example of Jesus Christ in procuring pardon and salvation. But this efficacy consists, not in their appeasing the anger of God, and disposing him to be merciful, but in their moral influence on men, in bringing them to repentance, holiness, and an obedient life, and thus rendering them fit subjects of forgiveness and the divine favor. The sufferings and death of Christ are thus represented as being not in our stead, but for our benefit; and intended to render the forgiveness of sin consistent with "the honors of the divine law, the character of the lawgiver, and the interests of his moral kingdom," not by satisfying justice, but by subduing the spirit of rebellion, restoring the authority and power of the law, and making men obedient subjects.—*H. Ware.*

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APPENDIX I.—p. 158.

Now, as God is the Author of our being, and as that portion of reason, which we have, was given us by him for our guide, it is certainly very remarkable, and what we should not expect, that instead of indicating to us truly his character, and dispositions, and purposes, so far as it gives us any information, it should universally mislead us respecting them. Following the light of our reason, and the natural impulse of our feelings, we find it impossible to imagine, that the Author of our being, the common Par-

ent of all, can regard and treat his offspring in the manner, which the doctrine in question (the election) attributes to him. That, without any foreseen difference of character and desert in men, before he had brought them into being, he should regard some with complacency and love, and the rest with disapprobation, and hatred, and wrath; and, without any reference to the future use or abuse of their nature, should appoint some to everlasting happiness, and the rest to everlasting misery; and that this appointment, entirely arbitrary, for which no reason is to be assigned, but his sovereign will, should be the cause and not the consequence of the holiness of the one, and of the defect of holiness of the other. A man, who should do what this doctrine attributes to God, I will not say toward his own offspring, but toward any beings that were dependent on him, and whose destiny was at his disposal, would be regarded as a monster of malevolence, and cruelty, and caprice. It is incredible that the Author of our being should thus have formed us with an understanding and moral feelings to lead us without fail to condemn the measures and the principles of the government of Him, who so made us.

*H. Ware.*

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Now we object to the systems of religion, which prevail among us, that they are adverse, in a greater or less degree, to these purifying, comforting, and honorable views of God, that they take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute for him a being, whom we cannot love if we would, and whom we ought not to love if we could. We object, particularly on this ground, to that system, which arrogates to itself the name of Orthodoxy, and which is now industriously propagated through our country. This system indeed takes various shapes, but in all it casts dishonor on the Creator. According to its old and genuine form, it teaches, that God brings us into life wholly depraved, so that under the innocent features of our childhood, is hidden a nature averse to all good and propense to all evil, a nature, which exposes us to God's displeasure and wrath, even before we have acquired power to understand our duties, or to reflect upon our actions. According to a more modern exposition, it teaches, that we came from the hands

of our Maker with such a constitution and are placed under such influences and circumstances, as to render certain and infallible the total depravity of every human being, from the first moment of his moral agency; and it also teaches, that the offence of the child, who brings into life this ceaseless tendency to unmingled crime, exposes him to the sentence of everlasting damnation. Now, according to the plainest principles of morality, we maintain, that a natural constitution of the mind, unfailingly disposing it to evil and to evil alone, would absolve it from guilt; that to give existence under this condition would argue unspeakable cruelty, and that to punish the sin of this unhappily constituted child with endless ruin, would be a wrong unparalleled by the most merciless despotism.

*W. E. Channing.*













